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Effective 1 June 1987 JPRS reports will have a new cover design and color, and some reports will have a different title and format. Some of the color changes may be implemented earlier if existing supplies of stock are depleted.

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CHINA.....	aqua
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JPRS-UIA-87-027

SOVIET UNION
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

1 June 1987

IRAN: FROM SHAH'S FALL TO KHOMEYNI'S ISLAMIC REPUBLIC

Moscow ZNAMYA in Russian No 1, Jan 87, No 2, Feb 87

[Serialized article by Vladimir Vinogradov, former USSR Ambassador to Iran: "Notes of an Ambassador: From the Shah to Khomeyni"]

[No 1, Jan 87 pp 170-197]

[Text] It was my fortune to work in Iran for more than 5 years: from February 1977 to April 1982. This was a historical time for Iran. As everyone knows, in February 1979 the monarchy, which had existed for more than two and one-half millenia, was overthrown as a result of a nationwide revolution and Islamic republican rule was established.

Historic events in any country are always exciting and interesting. The opportunity to see them as though from the inside rarely occurs. I had such an opportunity.

Since I was in the swirl of events it was difficult to analyze them calmly. So my notes are not a study, or even a detailed, and in no case exhaustive, description of what occurred.

I am offering the reader several excerpts from these notes--on my life and work in Iran and on my meetings with various figures, both important and unimportant, as well as with ordinary people.

Iranian Society

Under the Shah Iranian society was like a multileveled pyramid: the higher up, the fewer people there were on a particular step and the more power and authority they had.

The Shah and members of his family were at the apex of the pyramid. This group of people which had monopolized power experienced no restrictions on satisfying any of their desires. All of them were educated abroad, knew several foreign languages, dressed elegantly, had refined aristocratic manners, and in their way of living aspired by every means to reach the level of the ancient monarchies which by history's oversight are still found here and there around the world.

A small group of statesmen, bureaucrats, military men, and provincial governors appointed by the Shah himself supported them, in practice governing the state. All of them were fully dependent on him and unquestionably fulfilled his instructions. Their position remained stable, although shuffling of posts did occur. Many belonged to old Iranian families and were related by kinship ties. It was virtually impossible to penetrate this unique clan: one had to have a proper family tree, perform services for the ruling dynasty, and possess a large, constantly replenished (by any means) supply of money. This small group of people was the Shah's most reliable support base and was closely associated with him.

The industrial-financial bigwigs who even by world standards were extraordinarily wealthy and were tied by multimillion- and even billion-dollar contracts (sometimes modestly called "business contacts") with major industrial-financial capitalists of the Western countries occupied the next step down. They did their business with the help of the Shah's family, bribing even ministers, high-ranking bureaucrats, and governors when necessary. The fate of the homeland and the Iranian people was the least of their worries.

The continually growing bourgeoisie, of average size by Western standards but quite large in the conditions of Iran, was at the next level down; it included owners and major shareholders of industrial, construction, and trade enterprises. As the economy rapidly grew, this group of people, who were very efficient and effectively used modern technological advances, got steadily richer, even though they were subject to the economic risk inevitable in a capitalist state. Their aspiration was profits and more profits, and their dream--the possibility of raising themselves to a higher rung of society, a little nearer to the Shah and his family. Among these people were quite a few merchants and shopkeepers who had become rich quite rapidly.

The rather numerous feudal landlords who dominated the agricultural provinces may be included in the next group; they owned the large farms where grain, fruit, cotton, sugar beets, and the world-famous Iranian pistachios are grown.

The clergy occupied an equal position in terms of wealth and especially in influence on the lower-ranking strata of society. They have traditionally played an important role in all periods of the country's history, as though they owned the souls of the Iranians, the majority of whom are illiterate, teaching them unquestioning obedience to the religion of Islam and to the authorities--the Shah. The numerous theological educational institutions in Qom, Tehran, Mashhad, Shiraz, and Rey essentially devoted themselves to expanded reproduction of the clergy--a typical for Iran and, moreover, most unproductive substratum of society. Religious figures as a rule are very independent people: they have received the tributes of the believers mandatory under Muslim law and owned large land areas, and a great deal has come to them both from the state and from the Shah. The strictly hierarchical ranks of the Iranian clergy numbered 180,000-200,000 people by various estimates.

Small producers, owners of small domestic and handicraft shops, and the main ones--an enormous number of medium-sized and especially small retail merchants, were on the next lower step in the social pyramid. Of course,

trade in the East is a common and attractive type of activity. This group of the population has played and will long continue to play an important role in Iran's social development. It is this group which makes up the unique socioeconomic formation which in many countries of the Middle and Near East is called the "bazaar." The bazaar is not only a place where goods and products are sold and bought, but it is one of the most important components of the country's political life and the barometer of that life. Connected by thousands of threads to the upper and lower levels of Iran's social pyramid, it can either paralyze the actions of any government or give it powerful support. The "bazaar" is in addition one of the most important sources of income for the clergy, a financier of mass demonstrations organized by the clergy, and the supplier of their participants. By certain estimates, up to 80 percent of the clergy's income was received from the "bazaar"; in Tehran alone there were about 5,000 "organizers" of religious processions. Consequently, even the bourgeois parties have tried to obtain the support of the "bazaar" in every way.

The bourgeois intelligentsia and the middle-level bureaucracy, as is usual in countries which are rapidly developing along the capitalist path, did not even think of uniting with the people. In Iran there was no popular "asceticism," for example, which was characteristic of the Russian prerevolutionary intelligentsia. The Iranian bourgeoisie most often tried to live comfortably, following fashionable "Western" models, while the intellectual part of it put themselves at the service of the "ideological" substantiation of Iran's affiliation with the West. But there was also another group of intelligentsia in the country which came from the lower strata of society; among them the Marxist-Leninist worldview became more and more popular, despite adherence to religion. A large number of college students and older secondary students were also part of this group. It was precisely this group of Iranian society which demonstrated great political activism, demanding fundamental socioeconomic transformations. The progressive students participated in revolutionary demonstrations and were part of the combat groups of the underground left-wing organizations "Mujahedin of the Iranian people" [People's Strugglers] and "Fedayeen of the Iranian people."

The main mass of the population--the urban and rural working people--were at the very bottom of the social pyramid of Iranian society. About 70 percent of the population was illiterate. An overwhelming number of Iranian workers are religious people accustomed to obeying both the dogma of Islam and the clergy themselves. Their class consciousness has become stronger in the course of time but the level still remained low. And the Shah's regime did everything possible to prevent the spread of progressive ideology. Political organizations and parties of Iranian working people were banned and real trade unions did not exist.

Iran, of course, is a multinational state: more than 30 nations and nationalities live there. The Persians, whom the country was formerly named for, make up less than half of the almost 40-million population. The national group following them is the Azerbaijanis; by various estimates there are from 8 to 12 million of them. Because of their large numbers and economic and cultural progressiveness, in the course of time the Azerbaijanis have organically increased in Iranian society and ceased to be a so-called

"national minority"; in Tehran, the center of political, economic, and cultural activism, there were about 1.5 million Azerbaijanis.

A substantial number of Armenians have lived in Iran for a long time; basically they are people of mental labor, but many of them are also retail merchants and artisans. In Tehran alone there were 27 Armenian churches; there is an Armenian church, a museum of Armenian literature, and an Armenian library in the city of Dzhulfa. There were two parties in Iran's Armenian colony, as everywhere in foreign countries--the reactionary Dashnak party and the progressive party. Usually after reaching old age most Armenians were inclined to return to the homeland--Soviet Armenia. Recently the young people have also more and more often shown a desire to move to the USSR. The Shah's authorities without particular enthusiasm did allow the Armenians to repatriate themselves to the homeland. The Shah considered them "his subjects" of Armenian origin. Nonetheless, the steady stream of Armenian emigrants did not dry up.

The numerous tribal formations--Kurds, Baluchis, Kashkays, Bactrians, Arabs, Turkmens, and others--were extremely backward economically and culturally.

The Shah's regime stressed the absence of national distinctions among Iran's population in every possible way. It was strongly instilled in people that they were all Iranians and all under the protection of one leader--the Shah. Instruction, press, and radio in any language other than Persian was prohibited. This was a forced method of erasing national distinctions which came from above, from the ruling nation.

During the Shah's time the Iranian Kurds' movement for autonomy was driven underground by brutal punitive measures. The Iranian revolution of 1979 at first gave the Kurds a glimmer of hope, but their movement was suppressed no less savagely than under the Shah. Skipping ahead for a moment, it must be said that the present "Islamic rule" denies even the very existence of some nationalities in Iran; according to one of the teachings only the one "Muslim community" exists and its members speak different languages. So the Islamic regime is in fact following the same policy on the nationalities question as the Shah did.

Books have been written about the last Shah of Iran, Muhammed Reza Pahlevi, and he was very glad to give interviews to journalists and wrote some himself, presenting his views on Iran's history and on recent events in the way he wanted them shown. There are even novels in the West in which the Shah is portrayed. All this flattered his self-esteem, even if he was shown in a not-so-favorable light.

The Shah has been described in a very contradictory manner: both as an omniscient prophet and a simple mortal who became flustered in difficult situations; a decisive statesman and a man subject to vacillation; a despotic, brutal ruler and a statesman concerned over the welfare of his country; a man deeply religious in nature and a man who indulged in base passions; a mystic and a well-rounded, educated man; and, a realistic thinker and a futile dreamer. All these, however, are more personal characteristics which even if interesting are of a subjective nature.

The objectivity is that for more than a quarter of a century Shah Muhammed Reza Pahlevi ruled an ancient country of almost 40 million people where processes of development were going on in accordance with the laws of life of human society. However, the Shah and those who came to power after him mistakenly believed that Iran was an exception, that everything there was supposedly different from what it was in the "West" or in the "East." It is apparent from everything that until the end of his life the Shah did not understand what forces move the development of society and therefore did not understand why he was overthrown.

It seemed that he really did possess unlimited power. Yes, a brutal punitive system was set up in Iran, the parliament, the Mejlis and the Senate did not contradict the Shah, and a unified political party, "above classes " and for "all Iranians" was created--the "Rastakhiz" (Resurrection). In reality, the Shah's direct orders were carried out without question. But... Life still went on according to its objective laws.

Growing fabulously rich, the apex of society thirsted for political power, and the large traditional state apparat corrupted by bribes and outright graft drowned certain useful undertakings in endless delays; the formalistic, demonstrative activities of "Rastakhiz" focused on extolling the Shah did not excite the least enthusiasm--this organization could only have been considered a party in the arbitrary hypothetical sense. With the country's industrial development the working class grew and progressive ideas inevitably penetrated into its midst. Despite the apparent improvement in the living conditions of the working people--higher wages, absence of unemployment, the appearance of consumer goods which were formerly unavailable domestically--the Iranian proletariat was subjected to more and more exploitation because of the gigantic rise in prices, the deterioration of housing conditions, and the lack of political rights; they therefore became more clearly aware of the flawed nature of the system of rule headed by the Shah.

The anti-Shah struggle which was being waged underground did not cease and from time to time appeared openly: daredevils entered armed skirmishes with the authorities and were called "urban guerrillas" or "Islamic Marxists"--members of strictly secret organizations of Fedayeen and Mujahedin. Anti-Shah sentiments were especially strong among young people studying in the country and abroad. The apex of the Iranian Shi'a clergy concealed their dissatisfaction since their traditional influence and position were limited by the new "way of life"--according to the Western model--which was being intensively instilled. The clergy, of course, did not decide to act openly but in the mosques frequently expressed dissatisfaction with the ways.

Yes, a great deal in the country depended on the Shah and the Iranian monarchy appeared stable and, it seemed, indestructible to the outside world. It relied on the powerful apparat of repression--the SAVAK secret police, a gendarmerie and army; it skillfully used even the people's ignorance. The major capitalist states, above all the United States, were the allies of the Shah's Iran.

The Shah ruled the state, but he could not control those forces which were operating against the monarchy system and, consequently, against him personally.

...The Shah received the Soviet ambassador quite willingly and the conversations touched on the most diverse questions whether the Shah liked it or not. He was relatively enlightened about the international situation and he was informed, although frequently unobjectively, about the state of affairs in the country; certain issues, among them economic ones, he knew in detail. He had his own point of view and tried to demonstrate this; in many cases he made decisions immediately and sometimes he said that he was being advised. He behaved calmly and showed confidence and only during the last meetings--in the fall of 1978 when revolutionary unrest was rocking Iran--did his dismay and lack of understanding of the depth of the events occurring in the country become apparent.

He usually received the Soviet ambassador in the reception hall of the Niavaran Palace or in one of the offices of the Saadabad Palace where there was no one but him. Dressed in civilian clothes and standing to welcome the person entering, the Shah would suggest he sit on the couch and himself sat down in a chair which stood on the right. Servants in dark livery with gold would serve the inevitable tea with lemon and back out of the room; the conversation would begin and the Shah would offer the initiative to his guest.

He knew French and English well, spoke calmly and confidently, and usually showed no emotion. He responded well to jokes. On the outside he was democratic although in the anteroom to his office in the Niavaran Palace where one usually had to wait 10-15 minutes until the appointed time a multitude of portraits of monarchs and presidents with dedicatory inscriptions had been placed on little tables. These portraits seemed to demonstrate the community of the powerful of the world to which the Shah belonged.

Soviet-Iranian relations occupied the main place in the conversations. Fundamental issues were discussed as were purely practical ones, the most important ones of course. The Shah's approach was perhaps pragmatic. He understood how important normal relations with the northern neighbor were and tried to use them to develop his country and strengthen its position. He understood that they could only be built on a mutually advantageous basis--he was completely realistic in that regard.

Such significant projects as the Esfahan Metallurgical Combine, the gas pipeline from southern Iran to the Soviet border, and the construction of major power plants in Ahvaz and Esfahan were among his concerns. Often the information on the state of affairs which he had was not specific enough, but he was ready to listen to counterarguments and even to advice. One time, for example, work involving expanding the Esfahan Combine slowed down because of a shortage of labor and a danger arose that the timetable would be disrupted. Our repeated appeals to the leaders of the Iranian Metallurgical Corporation and the prime minister had no success: in informing the Shah, as is customary, they tried to lay the blame on the Soviet side. We advised the Shah to recruit army subdivisions for the construction--it did not matter since the

army was not fighting anyone. The Shah said that he would think about it a while and a short time later he gave the corresponding order.

Sometimes he requested that the most important questions dealt with in the conversation be presented in written form and, as a rule, most of these questions were decided in a positive way, at times to the hidden dissatisfaction of the government which considered itself offended. Otherwise, it was impossible for us to act: the dense Iranian bureaucracy which had taken root from time immemorial strongly inhibited the country's development and damaged our bilateral relations. At our very first meetings prominent industrial and economic figures told us that direct contacts with the Shah were necessary on major issues: "Everything is decided by the Shah here, government officials are merely poor agents of his will."

The lack of initiative and the timidity of the state apparatus, which often irritated the Shah were, however, generated by the system of government: after all, he himself made all significant decisions. So a kind of vicious circle was created.

At one time a decision was made on a major economic question which contradicted the government's mood. Prime Minister Khoveyda incautiously noted that in talking with the Shah about this question the Soviet ambassador supposedly "went against the decision of the Iranian government." The Shah responded that he himself had changed the decision of his government; as for the Soviet ambassador, he was simply "very persuasive."

And nonetheless, expressing his desire in words to develop relations with the Soviet Union and in many cases encouraging this development in practice, the Shah was the whole time afraid of something. His transoceanic friends nurtured these fears in all kinds of ways, continually giving false information on the "perfidious" intentions of the Soviet Union. So he would say that he had received reports on some movements of Soviet troops and incomprehensible activity on the border with Iran; he would let it fall in passing that the unrest in the country was caused by "communists" sent from "international communist centers." It was true, he would admit, that these "centers" were located in Western Europe.

At first the Shah took the news of the 27 April 1978 revolution in Afghanistan calmly. "I knew that the Daud regime had to fall," he said, "but I didn't think it would happen so quickly. We'll develop relations with Afghanistan if the new Afghan government wants to." However, after that, as the Western "advisers" took pains to insure, his tone changed. "How can we not fear events in Afghanistan if your army is only some 400 kilometers from the warm seas?" he exclaimed with feigned anxiety. Detailed explanations had to be given. The Shah calmed down but before long his transoceanic line of information, or rather disinformation, was operating intensively. They tried their hardest to kindle fear that communist ideas would penetrate Iran and, consequently, to kindle fear of the Soviet Union. This desire to hinder Soviet-Iranian relations was, of course, not ignored in our talks.

The Shah, and at his instructions the Prime Minister Khoveyda, persistently tried to suggest to us that close relations with the United States, including

in the military field, were a temporary matter until Iran could stand firmly on its own feet. They wanted to use the United States and get everything they could from it; there was no talk of violation of Iranian sovereignty. "Let the Americans teach us to use the weapons they have produced, after that we'll drive them out," the Shah said. When, for example, the question of possible consequences of buying AWACS long-range reconnaissance planes in the United States was touched upon, the Shah began to try to convince us that these planes were necessary because Iran has very rugged mountainous terrain! We had to point out to him the radius of reconnaissance activity of these planes: they could cover a substantial part of Soviet territory--and, of course, the Americans would service them. Didn't this contradict his repeated statements that Iran was a country friendly to the Soviet Union and Iranian territory would not be used to violate the security of the northern neighbor? Besides, is it really not clear that in this case there was a desire to shift the burden of the enormous financial costs involving the development and production of the AWACS plans onto Iran (Iran was to be the first among other countries to get them while the Western European allies of the United States prudently refrained from doing it). The Shah tried to maneuver and said that he wouldn't allow the American pilots to operate the planes. This was, of course, unconvincing: after all, the crew training period was to be 5 years! And what if such a plane "accidentally" flew into the Soviet Union's territory from Iran? "Shoot it down," the Shah proposed coolly. In a short time Iran's refusal to buy the AWACS planes was announced. The need to reduce the military budget because of economic difficulties served as the pretext. Later the United States again pressured the Shah and he again vacillated. And then the revolution occurred.

Was the Shah certain that he would manage to maintain his independence despite the close alliance with the United States? From the talks the impression was formed that he was somewhat confident. This is explained, perhaps, by the Shah's illusions: he assumed that the Western allies considered him an equal partner and that he was "an equal among the great of this world." Once, trying to prove that Iran's participation in the CENTO military bloc and the enormous apparatus of American advisors did not tie his hands when making decisions, especially in crisis situations, the Shah began to assert that he always had the last word: "The Americans obey me." I posed a question to him: if at a critical moment their interests took precedence over Iran's interests and his own interests--what then? The Shah answered that such a situation was precluded and his situation was strong enough.

But what feelings did he have when he wrote in his memoirs published not long before his death that the Americans threw him out of the country "like a dead mouse"?

In general the Shah was pained by any evidence that the Western allies, especially leaders of states, did not consider him their equal. For some reason the British particularly annoyed him. Khoveyda told me that there was only one photograph in the Shah's bedroom: he is standing on the balcony of his chalet in Switzerland looking down and the British ministers are laboriously climbing up to visit him.

He often commented on international events during the talks and gave evaluations of the policy of certain countries. His remarks regarding the United States, with whom he wanted to be in equal alliance relations, were interesting. Obviously, not everything was going smoothly there--it showed through in certain remarks, although, of course, whom he was talking with was taken into account. The Shah more than once said that in relations with the United States he had many more difficulties than in relations with any other country and sarcastically derided the campaign in "defense of human rights" which the Carter administration was waging. It was felt that a certain cooling began in Iranian-American relations originally with Carter coming to power. Nixon and Kissinger were clearly more to the Shah's liking than Carter and Brzezinski. Still he wanted to meet with Carter and even sent his wife to the United States to make preparations for his visit; but he did not go until a year after Carter came to power, in November 1977.

During this visit fierce anti-Shah demonstrations took place in the United States. The reception ceremony on the White House lawn was shown on Iranian television and everyone saw the Shah wiping away tears. They weren't flowing from an excess of feeling--around them the police had dispersed the demonstrators by using teargas. A personal friend of the Shah--the Iranian Ambassador to the United States Zakhedi--arranged a counterdemonstration: sparing no expense, he hired Iranians living in the United States and brought them to Washington for it. However, the Shah's mood did not improve. It seemed to him that the American authorities were conniving with the anti-Shah demonstrations. He could not imagine how this American administration with its powerful special services would be unable to provide him with a worthy reception. He even began to suspect that the Americans didn't believe in the stability of the Iranian throne very much--these suspicions slipped into our talks after he returned from the United States. At the same time, in frank interviews with the Western press, especially on the eve of his trip to the United States, he developed the following idea: Iran can do without the Americans, but where is the United States going to find a friend like Iran? The Americans, however, put the Shah in a difficult position more than once. For example, in October 1977 after meeting with the Shah, Nelson Rockefeller announced in an interview with newspaper reporters before he left Tehran that it wasn't Iran so much as the United States that needed Iran's military might; AWACS plans would be sold to Iran not because Iran needed them but because the United States needed them, and so on in the same spirit. American journalists were not embarrassed to ask the Shah what his "political will" was and who would rule Iran "after him," clearly making it understood that those people abroad whom he called "friends" did not believe in the longevity of his rule.

It is very remarkable that in talks with the Soviet ambassador the Shah rarely referred to the country's domestic situation, but if he did, his remarks were superficial and reflected a desire to represent the matter as if the country were confidently developing according to the plans he had outlined, that perhaps everything wasn't going smoothly--difficulties in growth were, of course, inevitable, but the "people," as he used to say, were satisfied: "They kiss my hands when I appear in a crowd." And he alluded to the fact that entrepreneurs were receiving large profits, there were more and more vehicles in the country, the peasants had agricultural machinery, the workers were buying shares of enterprises, and so on. And if discontent appeared in some places, it was all the intrigues of "foreign agents"--real Iranians accepted his plans.

However, even limited bourgeois freedoms were not observed. All the political parties which had existed in the country had been disbanded (belonging to left-wing parties and organizations was punishable by death). "All they did was unscrupulously squabble among themselves over power," the Shah said. He created the "Rastakhiz" Party--the party of "all Iranians"--and it fully supported all the Shah's undertakings. He believed that whoever didn't support the Shah and "Rastakhiz" was not an Iranian. Much later, when riots had already started in the country, during one of the talks with the Shah I was curious as to how this party reflected the absolutely contradictory views of different classes and strata of the Iranian people. This time the Shah answered that he had been mistaken, it seemed, in his hopes for "Rastakhiz."

The Shah did not think of abdicating. This idea had never entered his head, even after he was driven out.

In the early 1960's, when the economic situation in the country deteriorated and the political crisis built up, the Shah began to carry out certain socioeconomic reforms which he called the "white revolution" and propagandists-- "the revolution of the Shah and the people." The Shah was very fond of this "and the people." The reforms accelerated the process of the establishment of capitalist relations in industry and agriculture, but by no means eliminated inequality among people; on the contrary, they intensified stratification among them even more. By the mid-1970's with Iran's colossal oil revenue, 54 percent of families lived below the poverty line. The Shah did not understand this, was proud of the transformations, and attributed enormous importance to them. In general he suffered from a certain degree of megalomania. For example, he justifiably said that Iranian oil resources were being exhausted (there were 10 billion tons of oil resources in Iran and 25 billion in Saudi Arabia) and asserted that the price of oil was too low. "What's this," he once exclaimed, "the price of a ton of oil is the same as a ton of Coca-Cola! But Coca-Cola can be manufactured in any quantity--you just have to grow the coca, but oil can't be reproduced." And yet he had already given the order to drill a 10-kilometer oil well. It is not profitable now, the Shah said, but later, in 2-3 years, the price of oil will probably rise and the work will more than pay for itself. The order was also given to build a huge number--23--atomic power plants to provide the country with half the electricity it needed!

The Shah arranged various pompous and fabulously expensive festivals, in honor of the coronation or the 2,500th anniversary of the founding of the Persian Empire for example, but at the same time tried to appear to be a modest person and a good-hearted family man. His sculptured likeness was set up throughout the country and enormous, very well-done color photographs of the Shah in the family circle hung in institutions, offices, and shops. During various ceremonies and trips through the provinces the program was certain to envision a "talk with the people"--an insignificant conversation with two or three simple Iranians.

The Shah's wife headed a special fund which did good deeds and encouraged the development of the arts, crafts, and the museum system. The "fund's" activity was to a significant degree done for show but its capital, as later became known, was used mainly to enrich the Shah's family.

The Shah met the new year of 1978 in his own circle. His guests at that time were President Carter and his wife and daughter and King Hussein of Jordan. However, Carter did not stay in Tehran long. He was only passing through and had to visit a number of other countries. It was not the meeting the Shah had dreamed of--a meeting of equals, detailed, penetrating conversations, analysis of different situations, formulation of joint solutions... Trying to somehow compensate for the lack of a business agenda, at the New Year's banquet Carter did not skimp on eloquent words. He called Iran one of the pillars of "democracy" in the Near East and in the Persian Gulf region. Hundreds of thousands of photographs of the powerful of this world meeting the new year with optimistic hope were distributed throughout Iran, millions throughout the world. Look, they seemed to say, the front line of defense of American interests is on the Arab Peninsula (so said Carter) and Iran is a true bastion of defense of the West's interests in Asia (so said the Shah). The one, without embarrassment, regarded the borders of his state's interests to be several thousand kilometers from the state, and the other did not notice his ridiculous role of "protector" of these interests which were alien to the Iranian people. However, it was believed that the Shah knew best what the Iranian people needed.

The Rastakhiz Party congress was held in early January 1978. Once again the very same person became both prime minister and general secretary of the party. This time it was Djamshid Amuzgar. Formerly the cunning political figure Khoveyda had occupied both posts, but then the Shah "theoretically" proved the illegality of this combination. But in reality he simply feared Khoveyda's growing strength. Now the Shah "proved" the expediency of the former situation. And everyone again admired his wisdom. But in fact the Shah considered Amuzgar his most loyal servant and did not fear that his influence would grow.

On 9 January 1978 an event common for Iran occurred: the police fired on a crowd in Qom--a religious center 150 kilometers from Tehran. As always in such situations, the newspapers wrote that there were "riots": the crowd did not obey the demands of the police, it was necessary to open fire, and the like. There were dead. How many? The authorities believed that about six people were killed. According to other reports--about 100. "Well, so what," they said to us. "This happens quite a lot, it will soon be forgotten,

there's no reason to worry. It would be better to identify the troublemakers--most likely some 'foreign agents' were operating." It seemed that no one was interested in this event--neither the press nor the diplomats. It is true that the demands of religious circles to return to the 1907 constitution which envisioned the creation of a Council of Clergymen clarified something. It was to insure that laws being adopted conformed to Islamic law--the Shariat; no law could go into effect without the council's agreement. In the 1940's the Shah introduced an "amendment" to the 1907 constitution: the monarchy remained the basis of the state system and the Mejlis also remained, but the Council of Clergymen was abolished. This, of course, aroused the fury of the high-ranking clergymen.

But what was this, in 1978, in our enlightened time to demand a return to the old ways? It is ridiculous and absurd. The latest whimsy of bearded men in turbans with beads in their hands, little known men, especially among foreigners. The only pity was that they drove simple people into the gunfire, while they most likely were sitting in their mosques.

As if nothing were happening, the Shah prepared for visits to a number of foreign states and everything seemed to go as always. However, that day, 9 January 1978 proved to be the start of a long chain of events which led to the overthrow of the Shah and the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran. If only one could know in advance what day will go down in history! But it is history that creates each day.

The Year of the Horse

On 18 February 1978 40 days had passed since the Qom events. According to Muslim customs, 40 days is the period of prayers in remembrance for the dead. This time the unrest seized the city of Tabriz--the center of Iranian Azerbaijan. There, as they say, again "riots occurred": crowds of people destroyed and burned stores, banks, and movie theaters where Western films were shown. The police "were forced" to open fire. This time the massacre attracted a great deal of attention--people began to talk about it not only in all corners of Iran but abroad.

The Iranian press and the Rastakhiz agitators worked together to repeat the version put out by the authorities: the riots in Tabriz were organized by "foreign agents" and "Islamic Marxists"; they also alluded to the indirect participation of the Soviet Union.

If the Shah and his apparat hid the real reasons for the riots, it means that they were very serious. After all the Shah should know that the Soviet Union and "foreign agents" had nothing to do with the events. Or did someone supply him with disinformation?

In response to the shots in Tabriz the Tehran bazaar went on strike and students of Tehran universities did not attend classes. This was something

altogether new. It meant that there was something in the Tabriz events which concerned the interests of people in other cities.

The morning of 23 February 1978 we and our comrades went to the Russian cemetery in Tehran and laid wreaths against the obelisk and on the graves of Soviet soldiers buried there during World War II. In the evening there was the traditional reception in honor of the anniversary of the Soviet Army at our Embassy. We were struck by the unusual frankness of the Iranian guests. They sharply criticized the situation in the country. They talked of strong opposition to the government on the part of some of the clergy, which was supported by the dissatisfaction of various strata of Iranian society. This was also a protest against foreigners' penetration into Iran--the reason for the destruction of American and British banks; and indignation at the rise in prices, the rapid enrichment of a small group of people, and the ferocity of SAVAK. Iran's intrusion into Arab and African affairs also aroused protest on the part of reactionary regimes. Nonetheless, the goal of the opposition was not the Shah himself and the monarchy, but increasing the clergy's role in the country's political life and changing certain aspects of the Shah's policies which had had side effects.

The people we talked with noted the great advantage of the high-ranking clergy: among illiterate people they enjoyed a great deal of prestige which would be easy to use, if necessary, to mobilize the masses. For example, recently the newspaper ETELAAT had placed a small notice on page 18 which the clergy did not like. Two hours after the issue came out about 300 people assembled at the editorial office; they were barely calmed down but it was announced to the journalists that if such a notice appeared in the paper again, the editorial office would be burned down! It is understandable that newspapers were afraid to print anything which the clergy might not like.

The picture of the aggravation of the multilevel contradictions in Iranian society appeared more and more clearly: poor and rich; rich and superrich; the countryside and the city; the clergy and the Shah; and national interests and "having one's hands broken" by the Americans. Gradually the monarchy regime, at any rate Shah Muhammed Reza Pahlevi who personified it, became more and more vulnerable to criticism from various sides.

In March 1978 the "Year of the Horse" replaced the "Year of the Snake." One wondered where this horse would gallop. It somehow became physically perceptible that although externally everything seemed to be going along as usual, important changes and events upon which the future of this country, its policies, and, consequently, relations with us depended were happening somewhere deep within the society. It was clear that the demonstrations in Qom and Tabriz were by no means accidental and that the solidarity movement which had arisen in various regions of the country was political in nature--those who were in solidarity with the opposition demonstrations were throwing down an open challenge to the regime. So, they were not afraid. Why was this? Did they sense their power or were they acting out of desperation? If the opposition sensed its power, then the authorities were not so strong.

What seems indisputable? Above all the fact that many social contradictions had arisen and built up in Iran as a result of rapid development along the

capitalist path in a short period of time. The clergy had long since felt its rights frustrated; moreover, in the future its destiny appeared even more gloomy--after all the country's development along the capitalist path would inevitably put religion even more in the background. But religious figures had an advantage over other social substrata which were also dissatisfied with the Shah's regime. They were less subject to the danger of repression--the Shah would be afraid to go too far: after all by suppressing religious opposition, he himself might blow up his country.

The small shopowners who had destroyed the banks which seemed to embody their dependence on large capital and the young people who are always passionate and very sensitive to repression and suppression of liberties also shared the clergy's dissatisfaction. Ultraleft groupings also appeared on the scene--the fires and destruction of stores came from them. Organizations of real champions of Iran's radiant future which were kept completely secret were obviously operating in places in the interior. Groups opposing the regime from among the national bourgeoisie had not yet shown themselves.

But on the whole the opposition was heterogeneous and ideologically and organizationally disjointed. The Shah's transoceanic friends in all probability tried to suggest the idea to him that intrigues were being raised against him from abroad. At the same time they extolled the Shah himself, in every way stressing Iran's significance to the "free world." The ambassadors of a number of Arab countries told me anxiously that the Shah was persistently striving for Iran to become the dominant power in the Persian Gulf region and in the Middle East in general. Who was he setting himself against? Against the USSR? Did he really not understand that he was being used? And surely not in Iran's interests. And surely not in his very own interests.

For no apparent reason the Americans announced their readiness to send 100,000 of their infantrymen to Iran in case the Soviet Union (!) attacked Iran. It was as though they said to the Shah: don't be afraid, be firm--we're with you. At the same time they tried to bind Iran a bit more securely to implementing their military-political plans directed against the Soviet Union.

Even many Iranians were embarrassed. The newspaper PEYGAME EMRUZ wrote frankly: the American "hawks" must be prohibited from poisoning the atmosphere of relations with the Soviet Union. Other newspapers reprinted sharp commentaries by Moscow radio on this account.

It was striking that high-ranking statesmen clearly did not attach significance to the dissatisfaction that had flared up, even though in mid-May 1978 the threat of major riots in Tehran arose.

The Shah ordered troops to assemble in Tehran and held a lengthy conversation with Iranian journalists--formerly he preferred to give interviews to foreigners. He avoided an answer to a direct question concerning the events of recent days and their reasons, and then said a great deal on the "great civilization" toward which Iran was moving and on the danger threatening it of losing independence and becoming Iranistan, and hinted at involvement in the riots of the Tudeists, that is, those people whom he called "communists", and the liberal bourgeoisie. It was the same old tiresome song. Of course, the

Shah acknowledged, there were certain minor mistakes, and he was ready to punish those to blame. The "Rastakhiz" was again lauded. He represented himself as an adherent of religion and noted: "A person who wishes to use religion as a weapon goes against religion and against the Shariat. In other words, religion can only support the monarchy but certainly cannot act against it. This press "conference" did not satisfy anyone.

In early June 1978 I visited the Shah. We talked of international affairs and Iran's domestic situation. Contrary to his habit, the Shah was somewhat agitated. "I'm doing so much good for the people," he said, "but everyone's dissatisfied. I can't understand the clergy: they yearn to return to the old ways even though they know that I won't allow it. But why do people support them? What do you think about that?"

I decided to answer the Shah briefly that obviously the whole point was that the classes which had been born as a result of the society's accelerated development wanted to participate in political life, that is, they wanted him to give up at least part of his power.

The Shah impatiently retorted that the Iranian bourgeoisie had no concern with politics; they merely acquired money and transferred it abroad; but the working people were living better and better every day and there was the "Rastakhiz" Party to express political sentiments.

These words made a bad impression and I did not feel like continuing the conversation: was it really true that the Shah did not see what was happening in the country or was he being cunning? Controlling myself I answered the question: is it possible to unite people with different ideologies into one political party? The Shah agreed: no, it is impossible--but he immediately began to argue that Iranians in general are undisciplined, do not like parties, have no feeling of collectivism, and so on. He was going to improve and reorganize "Rastakhiz" but there was no returning to the multiparty system.

I asked the Shah what he saw as the reason for the riots. He again referred to outside incitement. Then I asked him if he had ever been in the southern regions of Tehran where the poor people lived, that is, the majority of the capital's population. The Shah answered uncertainly that he had, but immediately added: "True, it was a long time ago," and was curious why I asked about it.

I said that the southern regions of the city differed sharply from the northern regions where the rich people settle. And the entire country, figuratively speaking, was divided into the north and the south. The south sees how the north lives and demands rights. "I don't think that's so," said the Shah. "What's the reason for the disturbances and riots in the country in your opinion?" "I don't know the situation in the country as well as you do," I answered, trying to avoid talking about this topic which was a delicate one to the Shah. "I can only analyze on the basis of Marxism-Leninism, which is banned in your country." "It's all right," the Shah insisted, "within these walls you can even talk about Marxism-Leninism."

"Well, all right, I'll tell you. It seems to me that Iran moved quickly on the path of capitalist development; you yourself strongly encouraged it with your own reforms. The bourgeoisie class came into being and it feels its significance and power in the economy and demands equal participation in ruling the country. The Iranian proletariat came into being and became stronger and the workers also feel their significance in the country's life and their own power. They have their demands, including those concerning participation in managing the state. There is no way to escape from this--it's the law of development of society." After thanking me for being frank, the Shah said that he did not agree: all people in the country except loafers get rich and strive to get even richer--that is what interests them. The reason for the riots is something else: the intrigues of his enemies, including those from the clergy who want to return the country to the Middle Ages, and incitement by foreign agents.

Did he believe what he was saying? I think so. It was interesting to find out that a day after this talk, at the Shah's instruction, Prime Minister Sharif-Imami examined the southern regions of Tehran with a large retinue, as though wondering what it was the Soviet ambassador saw down there.

Meetings with prominent Iranian business figures convinced me even more that the political activism not only of the workers but of the liberal bourgeoisie was growing; the liberal bourgeoisie's "National Front" organization was making itself increasingly better known, more and more figures were publicly breaking with "Rastakhiz," and the country's ways were being criticized more and more openly and broadly. It was striking that not one of those talking said anything good about the Shah. The spirit of reverence, almost deification of the monarch, had disappeared unnoticed in a short time. The impression was even formed that if the Shah were to leave, no one would regret it. Was he missing the opportunity to leave the scene at the right time on his own?

The Shah appointed the Chairman of the Senate Sharif-Imami to replace Amuzgar as Prime Minister; Sharif-Imami was a rather sober thinker and self-assured bourgeois figure devoted, of course, to the idea of Iran's need of the monarchy and, the main thing, with ties to religious circles. It was calculated that Sharif-Imami could find a common language with certain high-ranking religious figures and with their help restrain those who took advantage of and kindled opposition sentiments in the country for their own interests, laying an Islamic foundation beneath them.

The name of the disfavored Ayatollah Khomeyni (Ayatollah is the high clerical title among Iranian Shiite Muslims) began to appear more and more often in the press. He had been in exile since 1963 when he spoke out against the Shah's reforms and especially against giving the Americans extraterritorial status in Tehran. The Shah exiled Khomeyni to Iraq. There he intensified his anti-Shah homilies and appeals--in Iran they were often put on tape. At that time the name Khomeyni was still not very well known by the broad masses and forgotten by many: he had been banned and the press organs under the Shah did everything possible to insure that he was not mentioned.

Toward evening on 7 September 1978 I flew to Tehran from Moscow after a vacation. The Embassy advisor Yevgeniy Dmitriyevich Ostrovenko who met me immediately reported that there were powerful opposition demonstrations in the city. We had barely come onto the highway leading to Shakh-yad Square when we were forced to stop--a traffic jam. We decided to make a detour--but we could not: hundreds of motorcycles entered the square in the form of a wedge. There were two or three young men on each motorcycle. They rode silently with serious, concentrated faces, and only the rumble of the motors was heard. A column of demonstrators appeared after them: 10 or 12 people, primarily young people--both fellows and girls--in each row. Placards and slogans--on paper, on plywood, and on white sheets of cloth nailed to sticks. It struck me that the placards and slogans were skillfully made and well thought-out, even the sheets of material had holes in them so the wind would not carry them away. The inscriptions read: "For Freedom!", "Down With the Government!", and "Freedom for Political Prisoners!" And there were many, many portraits, often entwined with fresh flowers, and all of them showed the same person: a white beard, scowling powerful eyebrows, a black turban.

"Who's that?" a Iranian standing next to our car asks another. "Khomeyni, probably," he answers.

Police and soldiers in trucks standing in the square nervously finger their rifles and submachine guns and cast sidelong looks.

The faces of the demonstrators are serious, even solemn--frankly, such as I have never seen before. The slogans can be heard--you cannot figure out the words but they are addressed to the soldiers and the police who represent authority and, ultimately, the Shah himself here on this square.

It was an unsettled night. Mass marches, one of which we witnessed by accident, ended in armed skirmishes--in places the soldiers opened fire, in places movie theaters and banks were destroyed, and in places fires started. All this was in the southern, poor part of the city. Our Embassy was not far away and shots were heard until morning.

The next day, 8 September 1978, was a bloody page in Iran's history. Troops surrounded Zhale Square in the southern part of Tehran and fired on the unarmed demonstration. Thousands of people were left lying on the asphalt. But who counted them at that point?

The army command carried out this act of savage deterrence. Afterwards martial law was instituted and a curfew from 2100 hours until 0500 hours was set in Tehran and in 11 other cities.

So, power was yielded to the hands of the military. What was it--a sign of the Shah's power or his weakness? Most likely, the second. The "liberalization" of Iran's political life, on which the Shah so willingly expounded, did not last for long.

On 9 September 1978 the Minister of the Court Khoveyda resigned: he did not want to bear even indirect responsibility for the mass shooting on Zhale Square. In the Mejlis there was "a tempest in a teacup": the honorable

deputies simultaneously criticized any government they could think of. The newspapers printed reports of arrests on charges of corruption and "incitement" to riot. Well then, the Prime Minister accused everyone in the Mejlis of being "communists." The Shah was obviously in a weak position; after all the Iranians were no longer children and they could not be deceived by such a primitive lie! Besides, there was another calculation here: after charging that the demonstrations were caused by "communists," the Shah immediately made all displays of opposition illegal, since "communism" had long ago been declared illegal in Iran.

A week after the bloody events there was a wake, or rather a political demonstration in which 25,000-30,000 people took part, in the enormous Bekheshte-Zakhra Cemetery located 15 kilometers south of Tehran. It was an unbelievable demonstration, unprecedented in terms of numbers of participants--the forerunner of rallies held later in this cemetery which assembled more than a million people! They did not dare to touch the participants in the funeral demonstrations, and this was one of the signs of confusion of the Shah's regime.

A very important Iranian businessman arranged a reception in the evening in the garden surrounding one of the luxurious homes on the slope of Mount Elbrus. Looking down from there Tehran seemed like a beautiful, fiery carpet. And looking up--mountain peaks all in a row. It was cool and quiet and only the tinkling of the ice in the glasses and the murmur of the guests was heard. The Iranian large bourgeoisie, unlike the government (which it did not give a nickel for), was very disturbed by the situation in the country and was taking its own measures. The possibility of coming to an agreement with the religious leaders was viewed optimistically: let them be "consultants" when laws are passed and see to it that "Islamic law" is observed. Ayatollah Shariat-Madari was inclined to cooperate with the government. Khomeyni, it is true, was implacable and it was difficult to find approaches to him; but after all, just 5 years before business circles had believed it possible to come to an agreement even with him and proposed to the Shah that he invite Khomeyni and advised him how to actually do it. The Shah unwisely did not listen to the advice.

The liberal-bourgeois opposition represented by its "National Front" organization had no major influence. There was no modern Mossadegh¹ And although the "National Front" members made a lot of noise, they were not dangerous to the Shah--they would get an outlet for their political passions--the right to hold demonstrations and rallies and to appear in the press. The regime was not afraid of that.

The business and political activism of the Shah and his court had to be slowed down. The Shah's brothers and sisters and other members of his family had already become the talk of the town. The minister of the court had to be abolished--the figure was too strong, stronger than the government.

To give an appearance of breaking with the past and radical changes in the country it would be possible to create a "National Tribune"--it would judge the ministers, including Khoveyda. The trial of Khoveyda, however, would give him an opportunity to "come out smelling like a rose." Khoveyda's brilliant oratorical abilities, unique knowledge of all state affairs, and the impossibility of crossing out everything that was accomplished in 13 years as premier (and these were, after all, the "best years" of the Shah's rule) would allow Khoveyda to clear himself, so to speak, so that he could return to political life at a later time.

So, taking a swig of whiskey or Campari, or having a bite of sherbet, the large bourgeois in September 1978 laid its plans.

And, in fact, it was announced about a week later that members of the Shah's family were prohibited from engaging in politics or business. However, there was one very interesting detail. It turned out that the order on the code of behavior of the Shah's family adopted back in July was not published until late September 1978. So the Shah gave his family almost three months to put their affairs in "order," hide income, and send money abroad.

"Harmless" Ardalan became the minister of the court--he was already over 80. And his functions were sharply reduced, like the staff under his jurisdiction--formerly a powerful apparatus under the Shah to control the government and all affairs in the country in general.

Meanwhile the strikers increasingly began making political demands as well. To remove SAVAK agents from an institution or plant, to allow political parties, and to insure freedom of speech, for example. The strikes developed from economic strikes into political ones. They had an even more perceptible economic impact on the situation in the country, but now with political demands. Strikes of solidarity with those striking at other plants or institutions to protect their interests attested to increased political consciousness.

"Central strike committees" began to be set up a little later; elected local delegates were members of these committees. This was yet another level of the strike and political struggle, a step toward coordinating the opposition movement on the scale of the entire country.

There was a large strike at the Esfahan Metallurgical Combine--20,000 people struck. The economic and political demands were: remove embezzlers and SAVAK agents. The board of directors appealed to the Soviet specialists to replace the striking Iranians at continuous production sites (coke-oven batteries, water and air supply facilities). The situation was delicate. If these services were disabled, enormous, perhaps irreparable damage would be done to the only metallurgical plant in the country, and after all, it was the property of the Iranian people. It was decided to answer the board of

directors in this way: under terms of the contract, Soviet specialists were merely "advisors" in the operation of the plant by Iranian personnel. But the dangers threatening the plant if services which were vitally important to it stopped were confidentially explained to the strikers. The strike continued but the plant was saved.

As before the government continued to follow a "carrot and stick" policy: shootings on the streets--and attempts to lesson the heat of opposition demonstrations by means of concessions. A new law on "freedom of the press" was discussed. There was a cartoon in the paper regarding this: a man lying face down with a pen in his hand and an official standing on his back reading the law on freedom of the press. Another cartoon reflected the demands of the opposition to bring corrupt ministers to trial: three people sit in a prison cell and the fourth place, for the chairman, is empty. The caption: "Let's begin the meeting without waiting for the prime minister to come" (an allusion to the forthcoming arrest of Khomeini?). It was reported that the former head of SAVAK, General Nasiri, hastily sent to Pakistan as the Iranian ambassador, was recalled from Islamabad and put under house arrest. So the Shah could put him at the mercy of the opposition. Political parties were allowed--they immediately began to grow like mushrooms: there were already about 90 of them. There were even "parties" of two-three people. That was "freedom"! But what did it provide, and for whom? A screen behind which the regime could prepare to rebuff the opposition?

6 October 1978. A hot sunny day. The opening of the fall session of the Majlis in the enormous modern Senate building. It is semidark and cool in the high foyer. The deputies of both houses are in black morning coats and the high-ranking officers and foreign ambassadors--in full-dress uniform. Groups gather and carry on unhurried conversations. In places the turbans of priests are seen. Everything is quiet and decorous, as if there were no bloody strikes on the streets of Tehran and other cities, as if the country were not paralyzed by a general strike. The ambassadors are animatedly discussing one topic among themselves: what now? Those who have acquaintances among the ministers and high-ranking dignitaries seek meetings with them in order to obtain even a little information on the authorities' plans.

A bell rings, and everyone moves to the semicircular hall with a balcony. Below, the members of the government take their places at small individual tables and then there are the chairs of the deputies. Foreign ambassadors and correspondents are on the balcony. In front, as though on stage, is a large, long table and chairs with high backs. The murmur of voices gradually quiets down.

Suddenly shouts are heard coming ever closer: "Shakhinshakh!", "Shakhinshakh!". Doors slowly open up behind the table. Everyone stands. The Shah in a white full-dress military uniform and the wife of the Shah come in. Behind them in measured step follow the Shah's military adjutants, the minister of the court, and other officials. The gold and silver of the orders, the aiguillettes, and the magnificent epaulettes sparkle. A cannon salute is heard. The Shah and his wife sit down. The high-ranking military men are behind their armchairs, standing at attention in white full-dress

military uniform. All those present in the hall sit down--that is something new: before they listened to "throne speeches" standing.

The Shah is quite calm and his somewhat hoarse voice sounds assured. But his wife cannot hide her agitation.

The minutes are decisive for the Shah--the people are demanding that he resign. But what does he talk about? He does not deny that there is unrest in the country but it is a result of the "democratization" of social life and, moreover, there were also "planned actions" and conspiracies. It is the same old song. Then he moves on to another subject. If there is no unity within the country, a threat to its independence is created. The idea is simple: rally around the monarch, Iranians. He admits that the government's economic measures are not very effective (the government, after all, is always the scapegoat). He talks of the need and the resolve to correct the "mistakes" (which ones and whose--no one knows). He does not mention relations with the United States and CENTO, although elimination of the Iranian-American military alliance is one of the opposition's demands. Nor is there a word about when martial law will be lifted. The speech is clearly not suitable for the time or the place; it merely whips up indignation against the Shah.

This entire meeting--the people, the posturing, the hopes--invokes a certain feeling of illusion and unreality. It is difficult to believe that it is happening in revolutionary Iran of the fall of 1978.

An event which at the time was given no special attention coincided with this meeting. A brief report in the press: Khomeyni was forced to leave Iraq at the insistence of the Iranian authorities. In Kuwait where he wanted to go, they would not allow him, and he flew to Paris on a Turkish visa. In this way the Shah tried to put a dangerous rebel a little further from Iranian territory.

My last meeting with the Shah took place in October 1978. The Shah began the conversation first and in a very unusual way: he did not understand what was happening in the country. He talked at length about how he wanted only what was best, for Iran to develop rapidly. He noted with a bitter smile that he still believed in those ideas and those goals which he stated in his book "Toward a Great Civilization." But the goals of the "great civilization," alas, proved to be unattainable; he had not "considered something adequately," but what? "What's the reason for my mistake," the Shah exclaimed with a kind of despair. "I will have to stop." It was strange that there was no spiritual unity among the people and yet his aspirations, the Shah's aspirations, were so noble. That was probably why the "Rastakhiz" Party disintegrated. (He mentioned "Rastakhiz," it seemed, with disgust).

Everything had gone to pieces, the Shah continued, everyone was demanding something. Mass strikes had paralyzed the country but it was really physically impossible to satisfy the demands of the strikers. "Before you suggested the idea that the living conditions of people had to be improved," he said. "We introduced subsidies to earnings paid quarterly. And then what? It turned into a way of pouring state capital into the pockets of homeowners. I tried to stop speculation on homes, but 'they' (this 'they' sounded odd on

his lips--who were these 'they'?; was the Shah no longer omnipotent?) rescind these measures. I arrest speculators who inflate prices and they set them free!"

He also complained of the emergence of an incredible number of political parties, and they all amounted to nothing more than shouted slogans with no thought-out programs. Perhaps in time two or three would remain. If everything went normally, elections for parliament would be held in June 1979, and then the prime minister would be appointed on the party principle--the one from the party which had the most votes in parliament. However, the whole point was whether the situation in the country would be normalized. The riots and dissension could intensify to such a degree that "events will get out of control" and the military would take power into their own hands.

I asked: "Could the military really come to power without the consent of the Shah, who is, after all, the Supreme Commander in Chief? Can it be that the army is not loyal to him?"

Silent for a little while, the Shah answered: "They could disobey me. That's the way it's been in many countries in similar situations. That would be very bad. A military dictatorship, of course, leads to a standstill in the country's development. But that, unfortunately, could happen." Again silent, for some reason he whispered in a kind of hysterical tone: "But I don't want more blood, too much has already been spilled," and suddenly asked, "Tell me, what would you do in my place?"

Unintentionally I burst out laughing: "Your Highness, I am the son of a St. Petersburg worker and I've never been a shah, who am I to give you advice?"

"All the same, you know what the strikers are demanding," the Shah continued to probe.

"You know that best. Incidentally, as far as I know one of the demands at the Esfahan Metallurgical Plant and in the Ministry of Culture is the removal of SAVAK agents--they're even producing lists of them. They're also demanding a change in the domestic policy course and Iran's withdrawal from CENTO and entry into the nonalignment movement. Aren't those reasonable demands?"

"It's good that you said something about the SAVAK agents; I didn't know about that. So, they blew it. But as for withdrawing from CENTO--that doesn't solve anything."

"It solves a great deal. Your country would be free of its connection with the military plans of the imperialist powers and, consequently, it would consolidate its independence; and that satisfies the people's demands."

"I do favor independence and in my last speech in the Senate I talked about it. Unfortunately, military expenditures will have to be cut, there's no other way."

The Shah again turned to the domestic situation in the country. There were no people who could bring the country out of the impasse. If candidates for the

post of prime minister declared themselves, it was only from a desire to subjugate everyone and everything to themselves, like, for example, Amini, who merely wanted to have power and even command the army.

I noted: "They're talking about the possibility of your abdication."

"Yes, I know, there are people who want that," the Shah quickly responded.

"Where--in the country itself or outside?"

The Shah stopped short: "Both places."

"What do you think will happen?"

"I don't know. But I'm getting messages from Carter, Giscard d'Estaing, Callaghan, and Schmidt. They all back me up," the Shah said slowly, "but as for what to do, they don't say."

I went home and thought: the Shah does not know what is really happening in the country but he senses the depth and scope of what is happening; he is a prisoner of events rather than a master. And even though he relies on the army, he still doubts it. And his transoceanic friends are obviously playing a double game: they support the Shah but are already looking for someone to replace him.

The Iranian ambassador to the United States Zakhedi, a personal friend of the Shah and his wife, arrived in Tehran on an urgent basis. He was a fervent pro-American, a friend of Kissinger and Brzezinski, and persistently cited the idea of a threat to Iran coming from the Soviet Union. He was known for his ostentatious parties for the elite of American society at the Iranian Embassy in Washington. It soon became known: Zakhedi brought the Shah "advice" from the American leadership--stand firm, don't make concessions to the opposition.

But rumors of the possible abdication of the Shah in favor of his son were spreading. Regents were being mentioned, among them Zakhedi.

And neither the Shah nor his wife could order the government to implement one project or another any more; the government was making the decisions itself. Power was slipping from the Shah's hands.

A Test of Strength

On 4 November 1978 bitter armed skirmishes with students occurred on the campus of Tehran University. In the evening Tehran television showed a tape which caught everything that had happened--the peaceful, but oppositionist student demonstration where slogans in honor of Khomeyni were proclaimed, and the soldiers firing on the demonstration. Then later the soldiers started using long clubs with a strong electrical discharge which caused shock. Then a turbid cloud of white smoke began to crawl and spread--tear gas. The soldiers hurriedly put on gas masks. The operator openly sympathized with the students. And they did not surrender, despite the victims; they ran from cover to cover and one hail of stones after another fell on the soldiers.

The day 5 November 1978 proved to be very dramatic. From early morning crowds of excited people spilled into the streets. They burned parked cars and destroyed banks, wine shops, and stores, and columns of smoke hung over the city. No police or soldiers were visible.

People coming out of the city said that armed young people were stopping vehicles and asking the passengers' nationality. If they heard the answer "Shuravi"—Soviet—they would stick an anti-Shah leaflet on the windshield, order you to turn on your lights and go home, and advise you not to go out on the street for a few days. They advised the same thing to our specialists in other cities—we maintained telephone contact with them.

But over the city there are rumbles and shouts, the wail of automobile sirens, and shots—at first single shots then salvos of shots, and the dull thunder of tank guns.

What was it--the start of a general strike? It did not seem like one--after all there were no purposeful political actions against the authorities--the Shah, the government, and the Parliament. It could be typical so-called "unrest," except that the scope was unusual. Had it been organized specially in order to frighten the inhabitants and quietly deal with the opposition?

A young Iranian fled to the embassy and hurriedly said that he was a friend of the Soviet Union and therefore had to report that people were preparing to burn the embassies of Britain, the United States, and, it seems, the Soviet Union; he asked us to hide our children in a safe place.

The British Embassy building was opposite ours. Looking in the windows, we saw puffs of smoke rolling from it. Our comrade came from the area of the American Embassy and said that a dense ring of soldiers was protecting it, but there were lots of excited people in the sidestreets around it.

We immediately called the Minister of Foreign Affairs Afshar-Kasemlyu and demanded that the most effective measures possible be taken to guarantee the full security of the Embassy and of all Soviet people in Iran. The Minister was surprised: how could they plan to burn the Soviet Embassy? As for burning the British and American embassies, he knew about that, but had not heard anything else... I had to cut short his unintentional acknowledgements: "Mister Minister, it is very apparent to us how the British Embassy is burning, but we don't have any protection." "I already told the military authorities about the need to put guards on the Soviet Embassy," the Minister answered, annoyed. "All right, I'll remind them, don't worry..." But the guards did not appear at our Embassy that day.

We heard about a tragicomical event. The owner of a Chinese restaurant hurriedly changed his sign to read "Shuravi"--which means Soviet. The people attacking it laughed and said that they knew what kind of "Soviet" he was; they destroyed the restaurant.

Evening somehow came quickly, and the radio broadcast a special report: a curfew was being introduced in the city again--from 2100 hours to 0500 hours. Immediately an anxious silence fell. Only the voices of the police amplified by megaphones announcing the curfew from their cars and prohibiting people from leaving their homes were heard. The streets instantly became empty.

An announcement by the military authorities was made on the radio. At that point, on 5 November 1978, they were "purposely" behaving in a liberal way in order to show what disturbances organized by persons "educated at the feet of foreigners" could lead to. And then a warning: they were now going to introduce strict order. (It immediately occurred to me that the events of this day had been a huge provocation by the authorities, who organized the pogroms and the fires to scare the Philistines.)

The same day the provocational statement of U.S. President Carter became known in Iran. In the strongest terms he warned the Soviet Union (!) that intervention in Iran's internal affairs would not be tolerated, and that if the Soviet Union did intervene, the United States would not remain neutral. Was it accidental that the false assertions of the United States and Britain of some kind of Soviet "intervention" in Iranian affairs coincided with the campaign which the propaganda machine of the Shah's authorities was fanning (it was singing, of course, with someone else's voice, however) and with the events of 4 and 5 November 1978 in Tehran and in other Iranian cities?

But how did Iran's "transoceanic friends" behave behind the noise? A powerful U.S. naval squadron assembled in the Persian Gulf. Reinforcements moved there, to Iran's shores. The well-known American magazine NEWSWEEK carried inflammatory articles: the United States cannot "give up" the region where Iran is located to the Soviet Union (!). What were they thinking up behind the scenes if that is what they were saying in the open!

On 19 November 1978 an announcement was published in the Soviet press which exposed the United States' attempts to intervene in Iran's internal affairs and which warned that the Soviet Union would consider such actions as affecting its security interests. We immediately translated this announcement into Persian, made copies of it, and sent it to several hundred people. On 19, 20, and 21 November 1978 neither Iran's press nor radio nor television even mentioned it. However, the Iranians found out about the announcement from the broadcasts of Moscow radio and the radio stations of other countries. Two statements of simple Iranians seemed to summarize the impression which the announcement made in the country. One said: "It is a good announcement which opens the fist which was earlier clenched" (that is, shows the intrigues of the Americans). Another noted: "It turns out that we have someone to rely on at a difficult time."

It gradually became clear that at first the Shah had been verbally informed of the Soviet announcement and, of course, it was interpreted as though the Soviet Union were planning to intervene in Iran's internal affairs. The anxious Shah appealed to his Minister of Foreign Affairs Afshar-Kasemlyu, who by that time already had the text sent by our Embassy. The Shah was somewhat reassured, but then the Americans and their "advisors" presented him with yet another version. The announcement, it said, was made in support of the

leaders of the People's Party of Iran (and here they were called nothing less than "communists" with ties to Moscow) who were acting against the regime. After a great deal of meditation, the Shah decided not to publish the text of the Soviet announcement. He reasoned, as it became clear, in the following way. If the text were published without commentary, it would prove to be an attack against the United States. And it was impossible to give critical commentaries: after all, the Soviet Union had stressed the need to insure Iran's independence and its people's right to decide their own fate.

The Soviet announcement, of course, had a sobering influence on those circles in the United States which were preparing to intervene even more vigorously in Iran's affairs in order to save their privileged position in that country by forcefully preserving a regime which was clearly unsuitable to its people.

The powerful strike movement continued and the disturbances on the streets of Iranian cities did not cease, at times growing and at times abating; and somewhere behind the scenes political maneuvers were going on--a way out of the situation was being sought.

As early as the first part of November 1978 the "National Front" had decided to take on the formation of a "government of national salvation" and, in order to obtain the consent of the religious figures, one of its leaders, Sandzhabi, went to Paris. There an agreement was signed with Khomeyni which said that the National Front would demand the abolition of the monarchy! It was not surprising that after Sandzhabi returned to Tehran, he was put under house arrest.

There were attempts to form a coalition government of "well-known figures," but these figures were either figures offensive to the country, demanded too much authority, or were afraid of popular disturbances. And in fact, how could they decide to take power into their own hands if Khomeyni made an open challenge to any government and declared the forthcoming "holy month" of Mukharrem a month of disobedience.

Everyone was talking about the same thing--changing the state system. The month of Mukharrem would be a test of strength. And the army's mood would become clear--if it did not stand firmly behind the Shah, there might be civil war...

On the evening of 1 December 1978 our trade representative Viktor Konstantinovich Slovtsov called: in the region of the bazaar where the trade representation was located there were disturbances again. Despite the curfew, the streets were full of people, there were fires and pogroms again, and skirmishes with the troops had started.

In the morning enormous crowds came out onto the streets in various regions (it later became known that there were more than half a million Iranians). Many wore white turbans as a sign of readiness to sacrifice their lives. Women and children came out too and everyone was in black--the funeral month had begun. And again skirmishes occurred. Soldiers opened fire with high-caliber machine guns on a crowd right next to the Embassy. The government again tried to lay the blame for the bloodshed on the "communists": it said

that they had organized the riots and put women and children in the first ranks of demonstrators, and so they were victims too...

I went into a watch repair shop. A fellow quickly ran in after me, said something to the watch repair man, and hurried away.

"They told us to assemble at 2100 hours."

"But what about the curfew?"

"We know how to sneak past."

"How long will you demonstrate?"

"Until we banish the Shah. We'll lay down our lives to do it."

"The Shah has troops, but you don't even have weapons."

"We'll get them."

"Why are you demonstrating against all foreigners?"

"We're not against all of them, mainly against the Americans."

"And the 'Shuravi'?"

"We won't touch the 'Shuravi'. They don't steal; they say that the 'Shuravi' get less than our own people at the Esfahan Plant."

That was what the people were saying. But what about the "powerful of this world"? I talked with one of the main representatives of the business world in those days. He admitted that 80 percent of the population was demanding that the Shah leave, and he should. Any other measures--like another change in the government--would only delay the crisis. They had to get out of the crisis as soon as possible since the country was moving toward collapse. The following was the plan of action. The Shah would abdicate the throne in favor of his heir. A strong constitutional monarchy would be established with the Shah's powers very limited by a regents council. All this would be open, in the Parliament, in the eyes of the people "so they wouldn't be deceived." The power of the military would be temporarily (?) strengthened and a "strong man," General Oveysi for example, would head the government ("It's too bad, Mister Ambassador, that you don't know him yet!") This man was needed then for two reasons: some kind of "Bonaparte" might appear from the provinces with an army and his own claims, or the tribes might rebel--this would threaten civil war, and ultimately the partition of the country.

The heir on the throne was needed temporarily, as a "unifying principle" and formal head of state. But it would be immediately announced that a coalition government with the "National Front's" participation was being created. It would be a transitional government. Mekhdi Bazargan, a National Front figure acceptable even to religious leaders, would possibly become premier. This government would hold free elections to Parliament and another government

would be formed afterwards which would set up a nation-wide referendum on the state system. The sentiments of the people were completely definite--Iran would become a republic headed by an elected president.

The foreign policy course would not change fundamentally, especially regarding the United States. The point was, the man I was talking to explained, that the United States had already "written off" the Shah and was seeking new people whom it could rely upon. However, Iran would become more independent from the United States and other Western countries. The rights of the international oil consortium would be slashed. The new government would also be curious to find out what the Americans had delivered in large, as yet unopened containers: weapons which could be used only by them or some junk which Iran did not even plan to buy? Relations with the Soviet Union would possibly improve (this, of course, was said to please me).

I had one more talk--with an aristocrat close to the Shah. He said this. The Shah should stay in power--he had decided that, there could be no talk of handing the throne over to the heir. However, the Shah was prepared to establish a "British-type" monarchy: the tragedy was that no one would believe that he would do it.

It was difficult to even calculate the damage the strikes and riots were doing to the economy, the aristocrat continued. There must not be an agreement with the strikers, however, their demands to overthrow the Shah were completely unacceptable. Even religious figures did not renounce extremist slogans. You could get along with Shariat-Madari but Khomeyni would not come to an agreement and his popularity, unfortunately, was growing (this was said with a deep sigh). It was also a problem that there was no organized political opposition. The "National Front" was a small group of 50 people who could not even agree among themselves, much less present a common platform, and they were even afraid of the clergy and were always adapting themselves to them. It had to be admitted that a military government would not be able to establish peace and order in the country. The whole point, apparently, was that it could not operate as it should. What were the prospects? Everything was unclear; probably the army would have to be tougher in order to slice off the part of the opposition which supported Khomeyni. The coming days of demonstrations in the funeral days of "Tasua" and "Ashura" would show if the opposition was strong and how the army would behave.

I went into the garden at midnight. It was snowing lightly and the air was moist. The Iranian authorities had asked soldiers to enter the Embassy's grounds for our protection. And there they were in the garden--one was dozing, another was sitting silently with his rifle between his knees. It was quiet.

What would happen in the coming days? I felt that they would be decisive ones for Iran. After all, it would soon be 19 December 1978--the day of traditional religious funeral demonstrations in memory of the Shiite Muslim martyr ImamKhomeyn. The day was dangerous for the authorities: the religious ecstasy of the crowds of many thousands of people had often led to riots before. On that day shops were prudently closed and foreigners, that is, "infidels," were advised not to appear on the streets. The entire city is

draped in funeral flags. There are long processions of men. They wear either black or white shrouds--a sign of readiness to depart for another world--and sway slowly and rhythmically, beating themselves in time with chains on their chests and backs. Hoarse shouts of "Shakh Khuseyn, vakh, Khuseyn" blend together into a single, ever-more-frequent cry of "Shakhsey-vakhsey." The exaltation builds up. They tear their hair and scratch their faces bloody. It is a terrible, dark, and fanatic ritual. A skillful preacher could direct this crowd in whatever direction he wanted.

In conditions where, by virtue of historical chance, the Iranian clergy headed by Khomeyni increasingly built up the people's movement, what would happen on "Ashura," the funeral day?

11 December 1978. Since 0900 hours people have been moving into Shakh-yad Square. Dark human rivers flow along the little streets and merge into streams on large main streets. By the end of the day it is known that millions of people have come. Iran has never seen anything like it in all its many centuries of history.

But what is it? There are no religious ceremonies. Chains are not seen and shouts of "Shakhsey-vakhsey" are not heard. The degree of organization is striking. Directors--young fellows with white bands on their sleeves--establish order. The city rocks with cries--people declaiming rhymed slogans in unison (the Persian language seems to be made for prosody): "Khomeyni Is Our Leader, Death to the Shah!", "Free Political Prisoners!". They are also declaiming in English (properly speaking, this slogan has already acquired an international ring): "Americans Go Home!" The women march separately, all of them veiled--a sign of both adherence to Islam and of a challenge to the Shah's government. Young fellows holding hands and forming a chain guard the columns of women.

A military helicopter flies over low. Unordered, a forest of clenched fists rises and three times the words "Death to the Shah!" thunder. Zakhedi, as it later becomes known, was in one of the helicopters--he wanted to make certain that people were speaking the truth when they talked of millions of demonstrators.

The columns flow into broad Shah Reza Street. Recently released from prison, Ayatollah Telegani, the most popular and respected religious figure in Iran, stands on the steps of one of the mosques. The demonstrators stop. Telegani makes a speech: Khomeyni is our leader, down with the Shah, down with all the Shah's regime, down with the SAVAK secret police. Iranians, don't give way to provocation, there could be SAVAK agents in your ranks. The authorities lie shamelessly that our movement is directed by international communism; we Iranians will be able to decide our fate ourselves... Then he reads the text of a declaration. There are 17 points in it and the first is: our leader is Imam Khomeyni. The rest of the points are political demands: abolition of the regime, elimination of despotism and exploitation of man by man, and freedom for political prisoners. We will fight for the country's real independence and against foreign domination and repulse the deceitful attempts to attribute the people's indignation to "international communism." And in conclusion: we will not lay down our weapons and we will fight to complete victory by any

means. Telegani asks: "Do you agree?". A forest of upraised fists and a massive cry "We agree!" is repeated five times.

.. A group of Americans from the CIA and other departments of the United States who had arrived in Iran occupied a whole floor in one of the best hotels of Tehran, the Hilton; they were specialists in short-term prognosis of political events. They contact whomever they wish, send reports to the United States, bypassing the American Embassy, and give advice to Carter and the Shah.

Ominous reports appeared just before the new year of 1979: the American aircraft carrier Constellation and several U.S. Navy ships had received orders to make for the shores of Iran to insure that "the Soviet Union doesn't intervene in that country's affairs." The pretext was a lie and a cynical one! Obviously, the Shah together with the Americans had begun an offensive against the opposition. From the outside there were the "decisive actions" of the United States, and inside there was the threat of famine, cold, and terror. An ultimatum was presented to the opposition: either set up a civilian government and pacify the country, or a rigorous military dictatorship will be established. "It is not important," the Shah said to the opposition leaders, "that 2 million people are marching against me on the street: the Iranian people are for me." He was even ready to make concessions--to hand over power to his heir.

The answer--demonstrations, barricades, rallies again throughout the country, and more shooting.

The riots continued for the entire first half of January 1979. The opposition more and more insistently demanded not just reforms in state government--they were talking of the fate of the monarchy itself. "Down with the Shah!" (in the Persian language this slogan is "Death to the Shah!") rang out more and more often. It is true that as usual he had a large and impressive force on his side--an army well armed by the Americans and headed by the high-ranking officers--a privileged class of Iranian society--who were loyal to the monarchy. They understood that they would lose everything if the Shah fell. On 15 January 1979 General Karabagi, the chief of staff of the Supreme Headquarters, in fact the head of the armed forces, determinedly announced that the army was loyal to the "legal government" and would defend the constitution. In other words, it would not allow changes. There were soldiers on the streets and the Shah's guard--the "guard of immortals" was especially zealous. With cries of "Dzhavid Shakh!" ("Long Live the Shah!"), it had recently sworn to fight for him to the last drop of blood.

Although Khomeyni was in Paris, he was the universally recognized leader of the mass opposition movement which was increasingly rocking the Iranian ship of state. He secretly tried to enlist the army on his side. The day before leaflets with Khomeyni's appeal had been distributed in Tehran: "Iranians, be vigilant and don't let yourselves be drawn into skirmishes with the troops." But the generals were just waiting for a chance to deal harshly with the growing revolution. Bakhtiyar, who had been successfully made head of the government by the Shah, spoke many times every day, heartrendingly calling for

"order to be preserved," reviled the leftist forces, and shouted about the "communist threat"; but there were few who listened to him...

On the morning of 16 January 1979 the phone rang: it was reported that foreign correspondents had been invited to a press conference by the Shah at Mehrabad Airport(!) at 1100 hours. So, all the same he had decided to leave the country. The TASS correspondent was not invited. At the court press department where he went for an explanation, they told him: "The list of correspondents has been authorized, there's nothing we can do." At 1400 hours there was a short report on the radio: the Shah has left Iran. The IZVESTIYA correspondent Ashraf Akhmedzyanov, who had managed to make his way to the airport, called and told what was going on. A small group of people, among them Prime Minister Bakhtiyar, Minister of the Court Ardalan, and the chairman of the Senate, had seen the Shah off. The Shah announced to the correspondents: "I have always wished the people the best; let Bakhtiyar's new government work successfully to correct the 'mistakes of the past.'" The correspondents asked when His Imperial Highness intended to return to the country. Maintaining his self-composure, he answered: "I'm going for treatment; if everything is all right, I'll return." And he added: "Inshallah" ("If Allah wills it"). At that moment "Inshallah" sounded symbolic, not simply a flourish common for Iranians.

The Shah and his wife shook the hands of their escort and made their way to their personal Boeing 707. A soldier threw himself at the Shah's feet and kissed his boots. With tears in his eyes the Shah raised the soldier from the ground, kissed the Koran, and stepped onto the ramp. The motors of the Boeing let out a roar. In a business-like way the escort moved to the helicopter awaiting them: it was dangerous to reach the city by other kinds of transportation...

... A swelling hum reaches the windows of the Embassy. Automobiles with their lights on honk continuously and rush about the streets and excited, jubilant crowds and cries of "Down with the Shah!" are everywhere. Each person tries to express his joy. The shutters of numerous shops traditionally closed for the afternoon break are opened with a crash; although it is daytime, shop windows and signs are lit, and shop owners throw confetti into the crowds of people. The image of the Shah cut off paper money is pasted to windshields: we have no Shah! The evening newspapers come out early with gigantic headlines--"The Shah Is Gone!" tumbling from the pages.

At 1500 hours there is a report by the Tehran central radio station: broadcasts cease, the military has occupied the studio. The military administrator of Tehran has ordered the troops to occupy all strategic centers of the city. The detail protecting the Soviet Embassy caught sight of a spontaneous demonstration and immediately drove off. By the way, many soldiers have already pasted portraits of Khomeyni on the walls of houses. It turns out that army units have substantially reinforced the guards at foreign embassies, especially the American Embassy. From our windows we could see five trucks with soldiers enter the courtyard of the British Embassy. Only two embassies are not guarded: the Soviet Union's and France's (Khomeyni is in Paris). So, we'll be under the protection of the people. A red flag is flapping on the high flagstaff of our Embassy against the background of the

snow-covered mountains; demonstrators passing by see it and wave their hands in salute.

So, on 16 January 1979 the Shah left Iran. Did he imagine that it was forever? I think that he hoped that in some miraculous way everything would turn out all right and they would invite him to return. After all, it had happened before. In 1956 he had had to flee by plane to neighboring Iraq, and then what happened? The CIA managed to win over the officers, politicians, a crowd of homeless vagrants, the bazaar, and finally some priests. General Zakhedi, the father of Iran's ambassador to the United States, drowned the "mutiny" in blood and everything went on as before... In any case, before he left the country, the Shah appealed to the troops with a secret order: be loyal and show no hesitation (read, I'll return). And meanwhile? Meanwhile the Americans have made him understand that it would be better if he did not come officially to the United States; Switzerland also refused him refuge, even for "treatment." Only the Egyptian President Sadat and the king of Morocco invited him...

Khomeyni in Paris announced that in the coming days he would appoint the new government of Iran. He called on the people to hold a mass demonstration on 19 January 1979, like the one held on 11 December 1978 on "Ashura" day.

About 2 million people took part in the demonstrations of 19 January 1979 in Tehran. New slogans appeared: "Down with Bakhtiyar's Government!", "Istiklyal, azadi, dkzhomkhuriya islami!" ("Freedom, Equality, and the Islamic Republic!")--the influence of religious leaders had clearly intensified.

Carter appealed to Khomeyni to give Bakhtiyar's government a chance. Khomeyni answered caustically: was it really the American president's affair to give advice to another state? Khomeyni announced his immediate return to Iran and repeated again and again: the Bakhtiyar government is illegal.

Bakhtiyar feared Khomeyni's arrival and obviously felt that his government, which was secretly laying plans to preserve the monarchy, would not survive this test; he tried to maneuver. At times he announced his readiness to hold negotiations with Khomeyni and at time he threatened military reprisals. The government did not govern. Bands organized by SAVAK agents terrorized the population of small cities and the countryside. Sometimes the officers seized local power and committed excesses. In response self-defense detachments were formed with the Mujahedin and Fedayeen in their first ranks.

The papers reported demonstrations where the workers presented class demands. The country was paralyzed by strikes, and still the workers frequently took the management of enterprises into their own hands and strike committees became management committees. The striking workers of the Kerman Coal Mine where Soviet specialists worked understood that the Esfahan Metallurgical Combine which employed tens of thousands of people was without coal and decided to return to the mines. Iranian engineers tried to stop it. The strike committee fired all the Iranian engineers and employees and requested that Soviet specialists assume management of the mine. The situation was delicate for our comrades--their functions were after all consultative. After conferring they answered: Soviet specialists would continue to work and help

those people whom the strike committee designated as managers of the corresponding sections.

Foreign specialists, including Soviets, were working at the machine building plant in Arak. The specialists from Western countries initiated sabotage. The workers committee called a rally and it was decided by vote to refuse the services of the foreigners, but... the Soviet specialists were not considered foreigners: they work honorably, live modestly, and are "part of us."

The revolutionary movement outgrew the limits prepared for it by the bourgeois and religious leaders of the opposition.

The Diarchy

The Chief of Staff of the Supreme Headquarters General Karabagi announced that the army was completely on the government's side and that it would introduce and keep order. The tone of the speeches of Prime Minister Bakhtiyar became even more threatening. But... the entire civilian administration, including the administration of enterprises, was subordinate only to Khomeyni and his "Islamic Revolutionary Council" (IRC), whose members were kept secret. A diarchy was in fact being established in the country.

The bourgeois newspapers proposed to Khomeyni and Bakhtiyar that they come to a peaceful agreement to hold a referendum on the country's future state system; this, they said, would open the way to a peaceful transitional period. Khomeyni objected decisively: power belonged to the "Islamic Revolutionary Council" which he had appointed. He did not intend to conduct negotiations with the "illegal government" and would return to Iran on 26 January 1979. Bakhtiyar was infuriated. On 23 January 1979 a parade of the Shah's guard was held for foreign correspondents. This was an open challenge to the opposition and a demonstration of force to frighten the people and make an impression abroad. A wet snow was falling. In uniform with their chests sticking out, the guards splashed through puddles and their feet beat a rhythm, and at every other step they shouted: "Dzhavid shakh!"--"Long Live the Shah!". Then they demonstrated hand-to-hand fighting methods. To the correspondents' questions the officers answered: "We support the Shah and we will not allow him to be removed."

On 25 January 1979 all airports were closed in order to stop Khomeyni's arrival. Bakhtiyar asked Khomeyni to "wait," and Khomeyni answered that he did not intend to wait. In order to confuse the unsophisticated, a demonstration was organized "in defense of the constitution," which, of course, envisioned a monarchy. But what are a few tens of thousands of well-dressed, well-to-do people compared to columns of simple people millions strong, proclaiming completely different slogans!

Military and police helicopters hovered over the city. Bakhtiyar spoke next from a balcony. He said that he had achieved everything: the Shah has left the country; I am a confirmed supporter of democracy; you must not revolt. And then he attacked the "communists" and the Soviet Union.

Khomeyni's ideas were not yet completely clear. What did "Islamic Republic" mean? This slogan resounded more and more often after the slogans "Down with Bakhtiyar!" and "Down with the Shah!".

So, the airports were closed and Khomeyni could not arrive at the time he had designated. Bakhtiyar tried to take the offensive. Holding any kind of meeting, rally, or demonstration was categorically prohibited. Despite that, on 26 January 1979, the day Khomeyni's arrival was expected, rallies and demonstrations took place. Tehran University was again the center of them. Troops dealt harshly with the "offenders," and many were killed and wounded. By evening the corpses had been taken away and the pools of blood at the scene of the shooting were covered with flowers.

On 27 January 1979 there was a powerful demonstration in response to the shootings and again more than a million people--both young people and middle-aged--were on the streets. The slogans were: "Today Is Your Last Hour, Bakhtiyar!", "Today We Are Peaceful, Tomorrow We Will Start Shooting!", "Our Patience Has Run Out", and "Bakhtiyar Is a Traitor!". In the evening an "important government report" was broadcast: Bakhtiyar was planning to go to Paris to meet with Khomeyni; supposedly this had been agreed to.

Khomeyni's response spread like lightning throughout the city: Bakhtiyar's announcement is a lie, he is the illegal premier, I will not negotiate with him; be vigilant; there is a monstrous conspiracy against the revolution.

An armed struggle again erupted in the university region and again many people were killed. Reports came in about major armed confrontations in other cities. It was becoming more and more apparent: a mass armed struggle had begun.

All these days we had one great concern: we had to guarantee the security of Soviet people working in Iran. Most of them were technical specialists and they lived with their families throughout the country--in 22 places. The decision was made to send children and women back to the Soviet Union. We organized their departure on Aeroflot planes. When the airports were closed, we sent them by bus to the port of Anzeli on the Caspian Sea and then to Baku on Soviet steamships. We even had to use motor vehicle transport--they crossed the border point at Astara--and passenger trains. The Aeroflot pilots did an outstanding job. Often the military authorities put the landing and take-off at the discretion of the crews--without guidance from land. Aeroflot IL-62's landed in pouring rain--the Iranians could not restrain themselves from applauding. We also helped the families of workers from other socialist countries leave.

... Bakhtiyar held his next press conference. A large portrait of the Shah hung behind his chair. While the journalists watched, servants hurriedly covered the portrait with a movie screen so that Bakhtiyar would not be photographed with the Shah in the background.

Bakhtiyar spoke in French: I have accomplished more than any other premier; I will go to Khomeyni in Paris since he set the condition that I leave the post of prime minister, and I cannot agree to that; I am ready to talk with

Khomeyni "as equals" (there was laughter in the hall); Khomeyni can come to Iran at any time but I do not guarantee his safety (this was already a threat); I will establish order, constitutions are not changed by demonstrations and riots (Oh, yes they are). And, of course, a favorite theme: the "threat of communism" hanging over the country.

One of the correspondents asked: "You are sometimes called the Iranian Kerenskiy; don't you anticipate the same fate?" Bakhtiyar said absentmindedly: "I respect Mr. Kerenskiy" (there was loud laughter in the hall). They asked about the shootings. Bakhtiyar answered: "It was the instigators who started firing." The correspondents were indignant, they had seen with their own eyes that the troops were the first to open fire. Bakhtiyar covered his ears and shouted hysterically: "I don't believe it, I don't believe it!"...

On 31 January 1979 it was announced throughout the city that the next day Khomeyni would arrive. It immediately became known that the U.S. Embassy had decided to evacuate most personnel and all family members from Iran.

The city is decorated with flags, banners, and flowers. Order and security will be ensured by 50,000 volunteers, mostly Mujahedin and Fedayeen. A meeting of the Mejlis is set: we have nothing to do with Khomeyni's arrival, they say, we are "legal." However, 30 deputies have already sent in their resignations, expressing their solidarity with Khomeyni. The streets are shaking from the rumble of tanks and armored vehicles: the army is demonstrating its combat readiness.

On the clear, sunny morning of 1 February 1979 the entire city is again on the streets. People are in an elevated mood. At 0940 hours an Air France Boeing 747 lands at Mehrabad Airport. A television broadcast begins. It is done carelessly and someone coming down the ladder is barely visible. The commotion of the vehicles and kicks by the police keep the correspondents away. The white beard of Khomeyni, who is getting into a Mercedes, flashes and... that is all. The voice of the announcer says: "For technical reasons the broadcast cannot continue." The screen goes blank for a moment and when it comes on again, the portrait of the Shah appears with the sound of the Shah's hymn in the background!

Khomeyni's car makes its way through the crowd with difficulty. Some people climb up on the roofs of houses to see better. They are trying to touch the car and crawl onto it. The volunteer guard try to drive away the overly excited people. It is impossible to pass, however. Khomeyni changes to an army helicopter which the "Khomafary"--technical personnel in the Iranian Air Force--have offered to him. The helicopter makes its way to the Bekheshte-Zakhra Cemetery where thousands of victims of the revolution are buried. It is there that Khomeyni holds his first meeting with the people whose leader he has become in such a short time--until very recently, some 6 months earlier, many Iranians had not even known his name.

We impatiently and anxiously awaited the return of our comrades from the rally at Bekheshte-Zakhra. More than a million people had gathered there and whole families had sat there since early morning. The storm of rapture burst when

Khomeyni appeared on the platform. He was dressed in the roomy black attire of a religious figure and a turban. With an unhurried movement he welcomed those who had gathered. For a long time he could not quiet the crowd down and begin his speech. He spoke sitting down. He began with an expression of sympathy to the fathers, mothers, brothers, and sisters of those who were buried at Bekheshte-Zakhra. "And the weight of your losses lies on my shoulders," he said. He caustically condemned the entire Pahlevi dynasty. It is just as illegal as the present Mejlis and the Bakhtiyar government. If they are going to clutch at power, the court of the people will judge them. He did not even mention Bakhtiyar's name but contemptuously called him "that man." He warned that conspiracies were being woven with the United States' help to bring back the Shah. He spoke sharply of the United States as well as Britain and of the plundering of the country by foreigners and the collapse of its industry and agriculture. When he said that the current illegal government would be replaced by a popular one, rejoicing broke out and many people cried.

Khomeyni left the rally by helicopter. The Bakhtiyar government was afraid to report on radio and television what Khomeyni had said. They only broadcast that he was in the cemetery and was holding a "namaz" [Muslim prayer service]! That was how our first--absentee--acquaintance with Khomeyni took place.

Our comrades taped Khomeyni's speech.

The next day Bakhtiyar announced that he was ready to meet with Khomeyni in order to discuss how to resolve the situation: he saw an opportunity to create a "government of national unity" in which several ministers who were supporters of Khomeyni would serve. But if Khomeyni declared Iran an Islamic Republic, he, Bakhtiyar, would ignore it. "The army stands behind me," he concluded.

On 3 February 1979 Khomeyni held a press conference and there was naturally enormous interest in it. The Shah, the Mejlis, and the government, he said, were all illegal--they did not express the will of the people. Let Bakhtiyar go "in a good way." If the illegal rulers try to reestablish the old ways with American and British help, he Khomeyni would call the people to a "holy war"--a jihad. Then he presented a program of actions. The Islamic Revolutionary Council would appoint a provisional government and hold a nationwide referendum to approve a new republican constitution--it was already prepared. Khomeyni emphasized that the army was part of the people and there were contacts with its leadership.

There was indignation among the foreign ambassadors. Rumors, gossip, and conjectures. Most of the diplomats from the Western countries did not believe in the possibility of fundamental change. And how could they believe that everything was collapsing--the Shah's throne which the army, the police, and the secret special services stood behind and which had seemed so powerful and stable... Uncertainty was frightening and the fear that Iran might be moving too far to the left was expressed more and more frequently. The French ambassador told how he had gone out onto the street to watch the demonstration and a group of young people turned to him and asked: "Are you a Yankee?" "No," he answered, "I'm a Frenchman." They laughed: "Well, French imperialism

is second-rate." And they began to talk about Algeria and Indochina. The ambassador was surprised: when had the people managed to develop politically?

In response to Khomeyni's speech Bakhtiyar gave an interview on French radio and television. He was enraged, he said, I will not leave, I am the legal head of the government and I will arrest and execute anyone who calls for civil war and takes up arms. A meticulous interviewer asked: "All the same, what will you answer if Khomeyni says 'Leave' again? "I'll say one thing: 'Merde'" Things are going badly for a premier when he resorts to vulgar language.

On the evening of 5 February 1979 Khomeyni took a decisive step: he announced the creation of a new authority in the country. In his speech he again described the Pahlevi dynasty as murderous and called it unconstitutional since Reza Khan, the father of the current Shah, had seized power by force and his son Muhammed Reza Pahlevi not only illegally ruled the country but also restricted the constitution to his benefit. The country became subordinate to the United States, its wealth was plundered and economy ruined, and despotism reigned. The people expressed their will against the monarchy and chose a leader for themselves--Khomeyni. In that difficult moment he took on the responsibility for the country's fate. At the suggestion of the Islamic Revolutionary Council, he appointed Mekhdi Bazargan prime minister of the provisional government. This government was unusual--it was created according to Muslim law and the will of the people. Therefore any disobedience would be opposition to religion--apostasy. All state employees and the army had to obey the new government and only the new government. The army could only follow the laws of the Shariat--it was the will of Allah.

Having resorted to the threat of religious retribution for apostasy, Khomeyni made an uncommonly strong move to win over the main mass of Iranians--above all the soldiers. This was the struggle for the army. Obviously, it still represented a danger to him.

So, a diarchy was established in Iran. No matter how events unfolded, there would be no return to monarchy.

FOOTNOTE

1. Muhammed Mossadegh (1881-1967)--prime minister of Iran in 1951-1953 (with a break). One of the founders (1949) and leaders of the "National Front" organization. Supported Iran following an independent foreign policy. Played an important role in the movement for nationalization of the country's oil industry.

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[No 2, Feb 87 pp 184-210]

[Text] An End and a Beginning

The pages of newspapers are full of telegrams about readiness to serve the new government. The telegrams are from almost all the ministers, including the minister of foreign affairs, from cities, from trade unions, from students of all universities, and even from the leaders of Bakhtiyar's (!) tribes. The announcement of the minister of foreign affairs in Bakhtiyar's government on Iran's withdrawal from CENTO--a somewhat belated step--has been published. Phantom jets and helicopters roar over Tehran to frighten the citizens. Bakhtiyar speaks: if Khomeyni's announcement on creating a new government is a joke, he is ready to endure it, but if this government tries to function, it will be neutralized by force.

Further events are already of daily importance.

On 8 February 1979 there is a powerful demonstration in support of Khomeyni and Bazargan on Freedom Square (the new name for Shakh-yad Square). A resolution is adopted: down with Bakhtiyar, all members of the Mejlis must immediately tender their resignations, and employees of state institutions are obliged to obey only Bazargan's government. The last point is very notable: all international treaties and agreements are declared inoperative if they are not approved by the provisional revolutionary government. It is clear that this refers to agreements with the United States and other Western countries which ensnared the country and placed it in bondage. The people are taking the management of Iran's affairs into their own hands!

Demonstrations are held throughout the country. More than 1 million people participate in them in the city of Mashhad. That means that the peasants have linked up with the movement. Reports on the voluntary partition of estate lands arrive. In Esfahan--not to speak of Qom, the religious center of the country, self-government has been established spontaneously, committees and voluntary militia are working, and the like. They are pulling the carpet out from under the regime not by a thread but in enormous pieces.

Everyone is waiting for Bazargan's speech at the mass rally on Friday, 9 February 1979. He is supposed to make public the members of his government and its program. In general Fridays (the Muslim day off) are gradually becoming the important days. It is on Fridays that large rallies are assembled, important decisions are made public, and new figures, and not only religious figures, give program speeches.

On 9 February 1979, 30,000-40,000 people assemble at the stadium at Tehran University, which has become the center of revolutionary events. They listen attentively to Bazargan. He is short, with a grey close-cropped head and glasses, carries himself modestly, and resembles a university professor--and in fact at one time he was a teacher but in recent years has worked in private business. This expert and adherent of Islam speaks for about two hours. But he does not make either the program of revolutionary actions or their goals clear. There is also no talk of how to take power. It is mentioned in passing: we do not want to use force, "our weapon is justice." Moreover: if Bakhtiyar leaves on his own, we will take him into the new government. Bakhtiyar, who has drowned the country in blood! And this is the speech of a "revolutionary"? And there is not a word about what the working people will receive as a result of the change in power.

The interest with which people at first listened to Bazargan, expecting something, gradually diminished; people began to leave quietly. Impressions were shared: what he said was incomprehensible. One thing was indisputable: Bakhtiyar was given a breather, which he clearly needed and which was harmful to the revolution. But could it be that secret talks on how to bring the popular movement under control were already going on?

We were awakened by shots somewhere not far away during the night of 10 February 1979. In general we had become used to nighttime skirmishes, but this was something new: the firing was becoming more and more intense. We had to dress hurriedly and go down to our work place to clarify the situation.

At the order of the military authorities cadets who were supporters of Khomeyni were to be arrested at the Dyushan Tape Air Force Academy that night. Their comrades prevented it and armed skirmishes broke out. Three battalions of the Shah's guard were called up to put down Khomeyni's supporters. Then the population of this region rose up. All the roads to Dyushan Tape were blocked--barricades were built of carts, metal beams, furniture, posts, kiosks, and automobile tires piled up in heaps and set on fire; thick black smoke covered everything around.

In the morning there was an unexpected report on the radio: the military command was introducing a curfew from 1630 to 0700 hours. Almost immediately Khomeyni's statement spread throughout the city. He offered a last chance for a peaceful outcome of the struggle: Bakhtiyar--leave, the army--stop firing at the people. I will not call for a "holy war"--jihad--yet, Khomeyni warns, but if the army does not stop acting the way it has been, I will alter my decision and all responsibility will fall on the heads of those who started the armed struggle against the people. And then he appealed to the people: I rescind the curfew, everyone on the streets, but be careful--a secret conspiracy is being prepared against the revolution. And in fact in the evening the streets were brightly lit and full of people, but the exchange of gunfire was heard in all regions of the city.

11 February 1979. The battles continued in the region of Dyushan Tape. The cadets who rebelled and the heroes of many years of underground struggle--the Fedayeen and the Mujahedin, showed their military competence and cut off all roads leading to the academy using barricades and ditches. Even the tanks sent by the military command to put down the mutiny could not get through. Bottles of incendiary compound were thrown at the tanks and people fired on the infantry from roofs and windows. Two helicopters which were trying to fire at the school were shot down with machine guns. The military command hurriedly called for reinforcements from the Qazvin garrison, but the garrison from the city of Karaj, which is closer to Tehran, went over to the rebel side and did not allow the members of the punitive expedition through. A column of troops which came from the south was also stopped at the approaches to the capital. "Not negotiations, not a constitution. The only way is armed struggle!" resounded everywhere.

The ambassadors of the socialist countries through some miracle got through to us across the rebelling city in order to exchange opinions. We all

unanimously believed that this was the decisive day of the Iranian revolution. Bullets thudded against the walls of the Embassy. We distributed them among our guests as souvenirs of this day. We constantly maintained communication with other socialist institutions in Tehran and with groups of specialists in different cities of the country. Battles were going on everywhere.

At 1340 hours the radio broadcast a special report: by decision of the Supreme Military Council, the army would maintain neutrality in the battle of the sides! If the army received the order to be "neutral," that meant that one might believe the rebellion would lead to victory. Obviously, some agreement had been reached between the leaders of the revolution and the army--an extremely important agreement. But what made the army command actually abandon Bakhtiyar? Was it perhaps a maneuver of the army leadership and an attempt to pacify the people, above all the leftist forces, who openly came into the political arena and led the masses with them? Here is indirect confirmation: Ayatollah Shariat-Madari appealed to everyone to cease firing and "not let subversive elements (he meant the leftists) distort the goals of the Islamic movement." What kind of "Islamic framework" was in store for the Iranian revolutionary movement and for the young people who were now selflessly fighting in the streets of Tehran?

There was a brief meeting in the Embassy garden. Everyone who could be torn away from his work for a little while assembled. That day was an important date--150 years since the tragic death there in Tehran of the great Russian writer Griboyedov. A monument to him had been put up in the Embassy garden. A bronze Aleksandr Sergeyevich sat under the spreading branches of the mulberry trees on a pedestal made of Georgian marble and pensively peered at sheets of paper which he held in his right hand. A small fountain quietly murmured in front of the monument and streams of water fanned out and fell into the light blue pool.

The bright sun and unique blue mountain sky of Tehran. But the snarl of tanks, explosions, and rifle and machine-gun shots reach the garden. From time to time bullets strike the tops of trees and splinters fly. Large green parrots flutter about with frightened, harsh cries--a flock of them has lived in the garden for a long, long time.

Tehran radio reports that along with television it is going over to the people's side, and immediately orders to armed detachments are heard--where to go and where danger has emerged. More and more reports arrive on the capture of military garrisons and the defeat of the police precincts and SAVAK headquarters. Police reports thrown from the windows of police precincts fly through the streets and bonfires blaze--young people burn hateful papers. A multitude of people head toward the military warehouse captured by the rebels in order to obtain weapons. To do it they have to present a card verifying previous service in the army or an order signed by one of the rebel officers. The enthusiasm of the people is great, but, as can be seen, too many weapons are perhaps being distributed, and they fall into the hands of clearly random elements.

Bazargan's appeal to the people suddenly burst into this heat of passion: protect the soldiers from "subversive elements" (?!). But really, "subversive

elements" were fighting with the soldiers defending Bakhtiyar and, consequently, the Shah! Obviously, the bold and decisive actions of the leftist forces had resulted in a crisis in the struggle, and this frightened the moderate bourgeoisie. The students at the university said to our comrades: "What about Khomeyni!? We have our own goals. You're 'Shuravi' (Soviets)--that's well and good, but leave anyway!"

We were working late. Radios were turned on in all the rooms and broadcasts were heard in different languages. Suddenly loud laughter broke out in one of the rooms where "Voice of America" was tuned in--the latest news: according to reports from Tehran, Khomeyni supporters are waging battles "in certain places," but the United States continues to support Bakhtiyar! Tehran radio broadcasts Khomeyni's appeal. He gives a "fetva" (sacred order) to the troops and to all military men freeing them from the oath of loyalty to the Shah. This is a strong move--disobedience threatens religious retribution. At the same time there is an appeal not to attack foreign embassies. But we know about the destruction of Egypt's Embassy and Israel's representation--the sign "Embassy of the Palestinian Liberation Organization" has already appeared on its building.

Night came but we did not manage to sleep even for a short time. A terrible rumble as if someone were shaking an enormous sheet of iron came from somewhere. In powerful waves the rumble at times got closer and at times got further away. It turned out that an enormous arsenal not far from the Embassy had been set on fire and ammunition was exploding.

On the morning of 12 February 1979 the battles resumed with renewed force. One after another the army's strongholds passed into the hands of the rebels. Prominent figures of the old regime were arrested, including the SAVAK chief Nasiri and the chief of the Tehran military administration Rakhimi--he was identified on the street. The former prime minister Khomeyda had been imprisoned some time back by the Shah, who in that way tried to buy off the opposition.

In Sultanabad where one of the largest Tehran garrisons was stationed, battles against the "guard of immortals"--remnants of the Shah's crack troops--continued. Finally Sultanabad fell. American military advisors also ended up in prison. Some of them tried along with the remnants of the guard to make their way to the airport. A radio call went out--and armed detachments of rebels crushed them. Soon there was new information: the government had given the order to search for and intern Americans in order to prevent lynch mob law and reprisals against them.

A special report: Bazargan had arrived at the prime ministry building. His deputies had been appointed: on questions of revolution--Yazdi; on transference of power--Sabbagian; and on general questions--Amir-Entezam. The chief of staff of the armed forces, the chief of the police administration, and the manager of radio and television (Gotbzade) were also appointed. They had never been heard of before; it was only known that Yazdi and Gotbzade had lived in the United States and then appeared in Khomeyni's Paris retinue and flew to Tehran along with him. The other members of the government would be appointed later.¹ However it was not quite clear whether the new government

had complete authority, but it was essential to know that. It was decided to ask Bazargan himself. Our comrades managed to reach Amir-Entezam by telephone and conveyed the Soviet ambassador's desire to speak with Bazargan. They waited for an answer for a long time and finally the telephone rang: "Bazargan speaking." I congratulated the first prime minister of the new Iran. Bazargan thanked me and said that the government was firmly in power and the next day its full membership would be made public, and the day after that he would like to see the Soviet ambassador.

That very evening in a broadcast in Persian and in Russian Moscow radio delivered a message from the Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers A.N. Kosygin to Bazargan with congratulations and official recognition of the provisional revolutionary government. We immediately got in touch with Amir-Entezam--Iran's leadership still did not know this important news and was very happy about it. We also got in touch with the editorial offices of newspapers, radio, and television.

At 0300 hours the Soviet Union's recognition of the new Iranian government was reported on radio.

13 February 1979 was the first day of the republic in Iran and the first day of the Soviet Union's relations with it. The morning papers printed the Soviet Union's official recognition of the victory of the Iranian revolution in large headlines.

The ambassador of one of the Western European countries quickly paid a visit to me--he wanted to be make certain that the Soviet Union had really officially recognized the new Iranian government. After receiving an affirmative answer, he sighed. Now his government would have to do the same, but it had been assumed that unspoken de-facto recognition would be enough.

Reports on the approach of American naval ships to Iran's southern shores again appeared in the evening papers...

On the morning of 14 February 1979 I went to see Bazargan. It was relatively quiet in the city, part of the barricades had already been half dismantled and the car was able to drive in the middle of the streets. The windows of many shops were broken and there were signs of fires everywhere. Almost half of the men who passed by me were armed. Our Chaika with the little red Soviet flag was welcomed joyfully: people waved, smiled, and spread their index and middle fingers--a sign of victory.

The prime ministry building was surrounded by guards and a machine gun was aimed at the street from the steps leading to the vestibule. There was a multitude of armed people with tired faces inside the building; it appeared that they had been there at night too. They looked at us with open curiosity, after all the "Shuravi" were the first envoys of a foreign state to the head of the revolutionary government.

We came a little earlier than the appointed time but we barely had to wait. One of the rooms where the advisors of the prime minister had formerly worked

had been assigned as his office. The new government had pointedly decided not to stay in the official residence of the Shah's government.

There were three people in the office: Bazargan, Amir-Entezam, and Sandzhabi, a prominent "National Front" figure who had just been appointed minister of foreign affairs. All of them were engineers by education who had later devoted themselves to political activities. After congratulating them on the victory of the revolution, I gave Bazargan the official telegram from A.N. Kosygin with the recognition of Iran's provisional revolutionary government and a congratulatory telegram from A.A. Gromyko to Sandzhabi. A very unconstrained conversation started. Without hiding his joy, Bazargan warmly thanked the Soviet leaders for immediately recognizing the new government. The peoples of the Soviet Union and Iran, he said, have always experienced mutual friendly feelings, but the opportunity to show them openly has only just appeared and therefore relations between our countries must receive new development. The revolutionary movement in Iran is nationwide, national, and strictly Iranian and by no means "directed from abroad." Hatred for everything evil and despotic has merged together in it. At the same time, Bazargan hurriedly emphasized, it is an Islamic movement with its own leader (he did not mention Khomeyni's name--he named him later when his words were being translated). Now, after the revolution, is the first difficult stage, but experience and knowledge will come and the movement will develop.

I was curious as to how truthful the reports on differences of opinion in the movement were. Bazargan answered figuratively: Iran is like a waterless desert; it starts to rain and turns into a downpour and Iran acquires freedom; but a downpour also creates destructive streams of mud; however, as the mud stream abates, so in time will the movement calm down and we will move on to creation.²

Suddenly Bazargan noted: "A month and a half ago the Americans predicted to me that the Soviet Union would be the first to recognize the Iranian revolution if it happened." These words surprised me. Bazargan said that the Americans had already established contact with him long ago and asserted that any changes in the country had to be conducted within the strict limits of the constitution (the Shah's constitution?!), that is, "legally" and gradually. Otherwise, they warned, if a revolution occurred in Iran, the Soviet Union would be the first to recognize it! "And that's just what happened," Bazargan laughed. "It was you who taught us to make revolution. People in Iran are well aware of the 1917 revolution in Russia." I answered that there was in fact a great deal in common between the Iranian revolution and the February revolution of 1917 in Russia. Bazargan interrupted brightly: "But why not the October Revolution?" "During the February revolution the question of the monarchy was decided--just like in your country now. But the October Revolution was a socialist revolution; it brought fundamental changes in Russia's socioeconomic order. So you want such changes?" "I was joking," answered Bazargan, "our revolution is different."

As it turned out, while we were talking with Bazargan the U.S. Embassy was seized--after a skirmish between the marines guarding it and armed Iranian young people. The skirmish stopped after the U.S. Ambassador Sullivan ordered the guards to "surrender." About 70 associates of the Embassy and 20 marines

were "taken prisoner." Yazdi, the deputy prime minister on questions of revolution, and, surprisingly, one of the high-ranking clergy, Ayatollah Bekheshti, immediately arrived at the place of the incident. The event was extraordinary. However the people we were talking with showed no concern--either they had known beforehand what would happen or they had not been informed about it. A curious detail: our assistant military attache was at the general headquarters on business at that time. They called the Iranian colonel with whom he was talking and asked him what to do since even the mullahs could not stop an attack on the American Embassy. The colonel angrily bellowed into the telephone receiver: "Tell the Americans to hang out a white flag!" And yet, just 2-3 days before this colonel would not have dared to even think of such an attitude toward the "ally." Many versions existed as to the reasons for the attack on the U.S. Embassy. The explanation most often given for this attack was that SAVAK records and some officers of this Iranian gestapo were hidden in the Embassy.

In the evening the quiet which had come to the city again exploded. Suddenly radio and television broadcasts stop and the announcer says: there is an attack on the television station--we request as many armed detachments as possible to come to our aid as soon as possible... A short time later an agitated voice is heard: there is an attack on one of the mosques--we request combat units to come there. In 2-3 minutes vehicles with armed people are rushing along the streets, shouts, noise, and shots are heard... Yes, it is too early to put away the weapons.

The fight against the supporters of the previous regime continued not only in Tehran but in other cities as well. Fierce battles against SAVAK agents were going on in Tabriz. Soviet specialists were working on electrification of the railway in that region. They reported to us by telephone that they had been sitting in the basement for 2 days--the house where they lived was right in between the fighting forces and was heavy damaged. Iranian people's patrol members reached them by crawling on all fours and brought them chicken and "lavash" [bread].

On 16 February 1979 for the first time the papers reported the execution of a group of generals. Such reports became common in the days that followed--the "Islamic revolutionary tribunals," which held trials under Islamic laws, were working. All the accused were declared guilty not only of loyalty to the Shah, firing upon demonstrations, arrests, and torture, but also of apostasy and spreading "corruption on earth."

Information on Bakhtiyar flashed by: he was "detained." However everyone knew that Bakhtiyar was the "pupil" of Bazargan and Bazargan would not let him be hurt. It was a delicate situation for the first premier of the revolutionary government: after all Bakhtiyar was guilty of executing thousands of people and his hatred of the revolution was well known. Following that was more information: the report on Bakhtiyar's arrest was a "mistake," he was hiding somewhere. A "suggestion" was immediately put forth. Bakhtiyar avoided arrest because he had been a friend of Bazargan for 30 years. It must be said that in a short time Bakhtiyar surfaced in Paris and undertook energetic activities against the Iranian revolution and against Khomeyni... By the time

of the new wave of struggle for power, Bazargan had already been swept from the post of prime minister...

In the short time Sandzhabi held the post of minister of foreign affairs I had several meetings with this very old liberal-bourgeois figure, and the impression he left was good. When we first went to see him early in the morning, not far from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs an armed patrol stopped our car with the little red flag with the hammer and sickle and star depicted on it (this was also the emblem of the Fedayeen). As always in such situations, a crowd immediately gathered round. After explaining who we were and where we were going, we presented our documents. The fellows with the automatic rifles were not very literate and twirled our identification papers in their hands for a long time. Finally one of them said: it says here "ambassador at the Shah's court," and there is no Shah and no "court"--the documents aren't real. The crowd began to get excited. We sensed unfriendly looks, but there were also looks which said that a foreign ambassador could not be detained. We said that the documents were in fact old but as yet there were no new ones; after all not even a week had passed since the revolution and we were going to the new Minister of Foreign Affairs Sandzhabi--our young friends had probably heard of him. It turned out they did not know who Sandzhabi was. And although "Take them to the committee, to the committee!" was heard here and there, there were more well-wishers in the crowd. After looking in the trunk to appear important and assuring themselves that there were no weapons there, the patrol, unwilling to be sure, let us go on.

Sandzhabi appeared at the ministry for the first time that morning. Former officials of various ranks, frightened and pale, had clustered together in the reception halls and were quietly talking among themselves, anxiously awaiting what would happen to them. Formerly they belonged to the elite of Iranian society--it was very prestigious to serve in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Our arrival caused general surprise.

Sandzhabi received us very warmly and talked about the Soviet Union with real sympathy, it seemed to me. He recalled what a great impression the Russian Bolsheviks and soldiers who sided with the Russian revolution made on him when he was young--they appealed to Iranian Kurds (he was a Kurd by nationality) to fight against the oppressors and imperialists and against the Russian White Guard troops located in Iran. He also recalled Lakhuti,³ whose poetry is very popular there.

In the Soviet Union people were well aware of the popular, democratic nature of the Iranian revolution, he said. It is a great revolution of worldwide significance, and it overthrew a despotic regime and must now lay the foundations for a social restructuring of the country. It is significant that the Soviet Union was the first to recognize the Iranian revolution and the first in a gesture of friendship to send blood and medicines to Iran for the people's warriors who had suffered. Iran's relations with the Soviet Union must now become sincere, and fine opportunities are now opening up to make them so.

... The first days under the new power were strange ones. Everything seemed to be as before: there was a mass of cars on the streets, people crowded together, and shops were open. However, purges were going on in state institutions and new managers were being appointed; before they even managed to start work they were dismissed and other ones were sent for. Many plants and factories were not working--the ones whose owners and engineering-technical and management apparatus had fled abroad or tried to hide somewhere to wait for "better times."

A meeting took place at the metallurgy plant in Esfahan. The deputy chairman of the Esfahan Islamic Revolutionary Committee, Tekhrani, conducted the meeting. All the former administration was fired and some of them arrested. A provisional committee headed by a former head mechanic was appointed to manage the plant. At the meeting a resolution was adopted: "In accordance with the doctrine of the Koran, all classes are abolished," everyone is equal at the plant, and the administration is obliged to respect the workers and take their opinions into account. The committee's decision: tomorrow the plant must start work on a full metallurgical cycle. Soviet specialists working in Esfahan hung a sheet of material on the plant with the words "We salute the Iranian people on their victory and congratulate them on the resumption of work at the combine!" written in Persian on it.

After the holiday of the revolution daily life set in. Revolutionary daily life. And in many respects it was determined by the revolution's character. One more truth was affirmed: it is difficult to take power, but it is even more difficult to hold it. The question of where to go and toward what proved to be the main one in Iran's postrevolutionary daily life. Usually those who make revolution--individuals, groups, parties, masses--know what they want after the revolution, if only a general picture of the outlines of the new society.

In the first months after the February 1979 revolution the impression took shape that the only goal of the revolution in Iran was to overthrow the Shah. But after that? That was not at all clear. Dissimilar forces united by the slogan "Down with the Shah!" pictured what would happen after the revolution differently. And many of them obviously did not think about it at all.

The first step of those who were at the helm of the revolution--Khomeyni and his retinue--was a logical one: they put power into the hands of the liberal bourgeoisie. The provisional revolutionary government, as was already discussed, was led by its most prominent representative--Mekhdî Bazargan, a "National Front" figure close to clerical circles.

At dinner in one of the embassies when coffee had already been served I approached Bazargan, who was sitting on a small couch, and asked to interrupt his solitude. He answered readily, invited me to sit next to him, and asked how things were going. Officially it was known that he knew French. It turned out that you could talk to him in English as well.

I asked Bazargan if it did not seem to him that now, after the February uprising, the revolution was marking time. I got the impression that the revolution had no plans for the future. "You're right," Bazargan said, "we didn't expect

such a quick victory over the Shah and the monarchy regime. We expected victory after 6 years or 6 months, but in the end it was 6 weeks and now we simply have no plans for restructuring the society..."

"Islam, Islam Above All"

Bazargan hoped that the bourgeoisie would get full power although it "did not have plans for restructuring the society." But the part of the clergy who proved to be most active during the revolution did have such plans--this became clear later, it is true.

For Khomeyni, as for the bourgeoisie, the activism of the broad masses and the quick victory of the revolution were unexpected, and he did not immediately decide to make his plans for restructuring Iranian society public. He still did not know whether he could control the masses after the revolution, whether they would follow him, and whether they would want to carry out what he intended. But he had long dreamed of the dominance of the Islamic clergy in all spheres of life and of a person with the highest spiritual authority governing the state (at that time there was no figure whose prestige could be compared with Khomeyni's).

So the impression that no one in Iran had plans for social restructuring after the revolution was wrong. It was simply that few people knew about them. And those who knew either did not attach importance to these plans--they were so improbable for our times, on the threshold of the 21st century--or they did not say anything--they were afraid to reveal them for the time being.

But in practice things began with a gradual "Islamization" of life.

The phrase "Islamic republic" was heard more and more frequently in Khomeyni's speeches after the first days of the revolution. The press had not yet fallen under the control of the authorities, let alone the clergy, and the papers wrote openly that the Iranians did not want a "theocratic republic" and did not understand what kind of a "republic" the leaders of the revolution were preparing and what its essence was, and proposed other names for the state.

Khomeyni's statement--the first guiding political announcement--was like the lash of a whip. Simply the "republic of Iran" was not suitable, no one knew what that was. The "democratic" or "people's democratic" republic was also not suitable--that would be associated with Eastern European countries where "communism" was in power. Only one title was possible--"Islamic Republic," after all, we had fought for nothing but Islam.

No one knew what an "Islamic republic" was, even in the highest echelon of the country's leadership. The liberal bourgeoisie decided not to object: Islamic was well and good; the point, they said, was not the name but the essence, and the constitution would determine that. The leftists proposed other names, but their voices were drowned out by the powerful propaganda apparatus that the clergy had already begun to organize.

On 31 March 1979 a nationwide referendum was held, but the "secret" voting was by no means secret. The only question posed by the referendum--"Are you for

an Islamic republic?" essentially contained two questions--whether there should be a republic and whether it should be an Islamic one. But there could only be one answer: yes or no. Each person received two ballots--a green one (the color of Islam) which signified a yes vote, and a pink one which signified a no vote. A person had to put one of the ballots into the ballot box right under the fixed gazes of the fine fellows with guns standing next to it. Of course, they cast green ballots.

The preliminary results were announced the very next day. Of those with the right to vote (people 16 years of age and older, about 19 million people), 98 percent took part in the referendum on the country's state system, whose essential features could only be guessed at from the names. As was to be expected, 97 percent voted for an "Islamic republic."

Khomeyni named the new system a republic without defining its essence. After the people had approved the name he could use this name to cover what he deemed necessary.

So, on 1 April 1979 the Islamic Republic of Iran emerged. The new constitution was supposed to fill this concept with some kind of meaning.

On the eve of the revolution Khomeyni had said that the main task of the provisional revolutionary government would be to hold elections to a constitutional assembly which would formulate and adopt a new constitution. Now he was saying something altogether different. Since the people had approved an Islamic republic, the sacred work of composing a constitution could be trusted only to expert theologians. The draft of the constitution could be presented for a nationwide referendum and an unequivocal answer--yes or no--had to be given at once to a multitude of questions on the whole constitution. Khomeyni was certain that the people who at his appeal had voted, without a moment's thought, for the name "Islamic republic," would also vote for the constitution; after all more than 70 percent of the population was illiterate. Khomeyni's course aroused indignation even among certain high-ranking religious figures. Ayatollah Shariat-Madiri and Ayatollah Golpaeygani openly announced to him that if a constitutional assembly was not convened, the referendum would be a farce. Khomeyni formally conceded. Allow an elected "assembly of experts" of 75 people to make up the draft of the constitution, he said, but the "experts" must be mainly well-known theologians. Later Khomeyni safeguarded himself even more: he announced that despite the "assembly's" decision, he could make any changes in the draft of the constitution--he would get the last word.

In June 1979 the draft of the constitution had already been made public. It contained a lot of pretty words and many references to "the procedures (for this or that) will be determined by law." But the law was the Shariat, medieval. Of course, there were also progressive provisions in the constitution--abolition of the monarchy, elimination of the upper house--the Senate, emphasis on the country's independence and anti-imperialist course, and declaration of certain freedoms, in particular political parties. The creation of a Council of five representatives of the clergy to supervise the observance of the constitution--it was this that was one of the main demands, if not to say the ultimate one, of the clergy in the prerevolutionary period.

The right to work and to free education was stated vaguely, but there was not a word about the development of science and culture, and the like. One thing was clear: power would remain in the hands of the clergy.

the people's party of Iran, in declaring its support of the draft of the constitution, expressed the desire--merely the desire--to strengthen the provision on the state sector in the economy and the provision on cooperatives, to envision rights to work, education, housing, and medical care, and to toughen the anti-imperialist orientation of the foreign policy clauses.

Khomeyni was in a hurry with the constitution in order to be done with Bazargan's provisional government as soon as possible. Elections to the Council of Experts were held, not without clashes. As was assumed, the overwhelming majority of its members were in turbans. Bekheshti served as chairman. He had still not reached the highest spiritual rank but everyone called him ayatollah. He had recently returned from a 10-year stay abroad--he was the senior priest of the Hamburg mosque, the largest one in Europe. He was a colorful figure. A grin seemed to be frozen on his strong-willed, altogether European-type face. Not a smile, but specifically a grin.

It gradually became clear: the "assembly of experts" would not discuss the published draft of the constitution but would work out an essentially new draft, rigidly Islamized.

The article on "valiat fakikh"--the principle of rule in Iran of the "deputy of the 12th Imam," that is, Khomeyni, and in his absence--the special Council, provoked particularly fierce arguments. This article reinforced Khomeyni's lifelong personal authority. One of the most important Islamic authorities, Ayatollah Shariat-Madari, called it legally nonsensical.

But personal authority is Khomeyni's goal in life. The main idea of his published lectures "On the Islamic Structure" (1969) is that there should be a strong "ruler in an Islamic state... It is clear that Bekheshti grins and always follows his own policy in the "assembly." Attendants offer silver ballot boxes to the members of the "assembly" and they toss the ballots in them--that is how the voting goes. Everything goes swimmingly. The opponents of full theocratization from among the rare representatives of the liberal bourgeoisie are invariably a small minority in the "assembly." One of them exclaimed angrily: "But that describes an obvious dictatorship!" Bekheshti, without wiping the grin from his face, retorted: "No, no, what are you saying? There was a dictatorship under the Shah but we have 'Islamic rule,' which the people approved when they voted for an Islamic republic." So, it is not a dictatorship.

By late November 1979 the draft of the constitution, a voluminous folio, was ready. The "freedoms" which were initially named in it were sharply reduced and then in practice eliminated altogether. One "freedom" remained--the freedom to obey the ayatollahs and the precepts of Islam. Each provision granting "freedoms" was accompanied by the stipulation "if it does not contradict Islam." But what is Islam? Any mullah can interpret it in his own way.

The referendum was held on 2 and 3 December 1979. The procedure was the same: two ballots--a green one and a pink one--one answer. Many leftists and some of the liberal bourgeoisie declared that they would boycott the referendum. But how important were they as compared with the millions of illiterate people whom the mullahs tell: in the name of Allah, the omnipotent and all-merciful, go and put the green Islamic ballot into the ballot box. And although the population's previous enthusiasm diminished and the voting went sluggishly, there could be no doubt of its results. And so it went: most of those who voted were for the constitution, and it was not important that most of them had no idea of what it said--no one even bothered to explain it.

The next stage was election of the president. Those wishing to come forward as candidates had to announce before 29 December 1979. Bekheshti, Banisadr, Admiral Madani, Yazdi, Gotbzade, Tabatabai, and many others a little lower in rank immediately registered as candidates. Khomeyni would approve the list of candidates. According to the constitution which had just been adopted, he received the highest authority in the country; in fact and on paper he had even more power than the Shah!

Soon after the revolution, in late February--early March 1979, an armed formation, the "Islamic guard" began to be hurriedly organized; it became the "Islamic Revolution Guards' Corps." They were strict in admitting people at that time; to become a "Pasdar" a person had to present several recommendations of reliability. The Pasdars had one task--to give their lives if ordered. The corps was clearly created to counterbalance the armed detachments of the committees; those detachments' members included many young leftists who sacrificed their lives when it was demanded, and did so consciously rather than for high pay like the Pasdars. The Pasdars were also supposed to oppose the Mujahedin and Fedayeen. The long-term aim was for the Pasdars to replace the army, which the ayatollahs not only did not trust but also feared, despite the numerous purges of the command.

At first the "Islamic Revolution Guards' Corp" was a semisecret organization, but rumors about it spread quickly. The ambassador of one of the Western countries once asked Bekheshti what kind of organization it was. He grinned to himself and, apparently wanting to make himself better understood, said in absolute seriousness: "That's our S.S." The ambassador, a social democrat by conviction, was incredibly shocked by this "explanation." However, in reality Bekheshti was not far from the truth. Sharply anticommunist and anti-Soviet in mindset, the "Islamic Revolution Guards Corp" was one of the notable features and foundations of Islamic rule. At first it was used in the struggle against counterrevolution, and then against those who were making revolution...

The Islamization of Iran was manifested most graphically in the establishment of new norms of conduct for people. All wine shops were closed and the Pasdars burst into hotels, destroyed the wine cellars there, and made a show of pouring expensive wines into the gutters. At first those who needed whiskey for medicinal purposes could buy it by prescription in pharmacies, but then even that was prohibited. Those convicted of using alcohol were publicly flogged. Foreigners were prohibited from bringing alcoholic beverages into

Iran, even for the diplomatic corps. Western diplomats were indignant, but it did not help, so they began making wine themselves by primitive methods under the protection of diplomatic immunity. Soon one of the favorite topics at receptions was the exchange of know-how: "You take fresh grapes...", "No, I take currants--dried ones are better...", "I assure you, fresh are better...", "Do you mean that wine made from currants is stronger?"

A week after the revolution Khomeyni suddenly prohibited eating frozen meat: he said it was not the Islamic way. This almost brought about a catastrophe since meat was for the most part imported in frozen form, naturally, and what is more, local slaughterhouses could never have managed without refrigerators. A terrible hullabaloo was raised and Khomeyni backed down. The ban was removed on various pretexts, but Islamic inspectors were sent to countries which supplied Iran with meat and fowl. They were supposed to verify that the livestock and fowl were slaughtered there according to Muslim custom: it was done looking toward Mecca, the blood was immediately drained, and so on. No one knew what really happened in the slaughterhouses of Australia, New Zealand, Bulgaria, and Hungary, but the learned Islamic inspectors returned to Iran and announced that everything was in order and with that the incident was closed. The main thing was that there was meat.

They began to establish Islamic ways with particular zeal in relation to women. First it was announced that they were required to wear the veil. Then very quickly, on 8 and 9 March 1979, protest marches by many thousands of women occurred on the streets of Tehran. They marched with their hair down, with lots of make up on, and wearing jeans, their whole appearance showing rebelliousness. But... a hostile crowd of Pasdars came to meet them--insults and profanity rained down, women were beaten, and bottles of acid were hurled into the ranks of the demonstrators...

The women had to observe "khedzhab: covering their heads and shoulders if not with a veil then a shawl, and wearing a shapeless garment with long sleeves down to their heels and wide trousers. People stopped selling goods to those women who did not observe "khedzhab"--placards with the portrait of a woman without a veil and instead of a head, a powerful man's fist, appeared at the entrances of even small shops. The cashier in the self-service store would not accept payment from a woman with an uncovered face if she did not immediately buy a shawl and wrap herself in it.

Women were prohibited from swimming anywhere at all--whether it was in the sea or a pool--together with men. They were assigned special places for swimming and they could only go in the water veiled! Bearded Pasdars with automatic rifles in their hands were happy to see to it that "order" was preserved.

However, that was not so very serious. Women were prohibited from engaging in many professions. The explanation? It was very simple: a woman cannot be impartial! And soon they were prohibited... from singing. In connection with this, Gotbzade appeared on television and explained with downcast eyes that the female voice excited men too much, and men had to be manly. Then foaming at the mouth, the "manly" Islamists argued for the need and expediency of polygamy and explained in detail why the right to have four wives was good for the women themselves. And then the punishment for adultery by women was

officially instituted, with a detailed description of the ritual: stoning or public whipping.

Islamization also affected another question which was critical in Iranian conditions--the rights of non-Persian nationalities and peoples. With the victory of the revolution, the Kurds, Turkmens, Baluchi, and Arabs began to hope to obtain rights reflecting their unique characteristics. Khomeyni and his theologians immediately announced that there was no such concept as nation in Islam; a single Muslim community existed and its members could speak in different languages. Islam above all. The attempts at negotiations with the Kurds and Turkmens initiated by the Bazargan government were immediately cut off. There would be no talks; the main means of persuasion was the sword, or rather the rifle. Khomeyni said that he himself would lead an army and establish order in Kurdistan in 48 hours. The announcement proved to be hasty: even now the Kurds continue the struggle. And they will continue it--a whole people cannot be dragged into the mire.

The Iranian phenomenon is exceptional in that from the first days the new authorities enjoyed the strong support of a majority of the population; even though they were ignorant, illiterate, and enslaved by religious prejudices, they were still a majority...

About 3 million people responded to the clergy's appeal and came out onto the streets of Tehran on the anniversary of "Bloody Friday." Unlike prerevolutionary demonstrations, mullahs of various ranks and categories marched in front of the columns. It was the same during the celebration of the 1,400th anniversary of Islam.

Khomeyni resurrected an ancient tradition: he called on the population to mark some special event by climbing onto the roofs of houses at a certain hour and shouting "Allakh akbar!" ("Allah is great!"). It was ordered to hold namaz prayer services on Fridays in the main squares in all cities. Specially designated leaders of the services, the best and reliable propaganda preachers--Imam-dzhome, spoke very little about sacred matters--they gave political speeches on the topics of the day. As many people gathered at these prayer lectures as the square would accommodate. The Imam-dzhome, resting his left hand on an automatic rifle (usually of West German production), emphasized his thesis with energetic gestures of his right hand, on whose fingers valuable rings gleamed. Oh, the Imam-Jome were brilliant orators and marvelous actors, spoke without notes and not so much "coherently" as eloquently, and could convince their audience of even the most improbable things. It is not for nothing that one of the main sciences in any theological school is the orator's art. The Imam-dzhome would talk in an inspired way, virtually singing. And people who had never read in their lives would listen to him with their mouths open. They believed him when he reviled socialism and wove fairy tales about the Soviet Union: they take children away from their parents, they have "common wives," and they exploit the workers there--the Imam-dzhome, they thought, is really almost a saint; he cannot tell a lie.

The first meeting with Khomeyni took place on 24 February 1979. In the morning I was put through to Sandzhabi by phone and I asked him to arrange

this meeting. The answer came in about 2 hours: Khomeyni would receive me at 1700 hours; in general he did not receive foreign ambassadors, but he would make an exception for the Soviet ambassador. No one knew where Khomeyni's "residence" was located and what is more, there would probably be a strong guard there whom it would be impossible to get past; therefore we asked for an escort and they sent us two bearded fellows with automatic rifles.

We drove south for a long time, although our Embassy was not in the north--traffic was very heavy and time and again there were traffic jams. We drove past the poor regions; there were houses singed by fire, walls dented by bullets, and broken window glass everywhere; here and there were pedestals where the Shah's statue had been thrown down. There were many people on the streets, however, and they were waving, saluting the red flag and our big car forcing its way along the ruts of the backstreets. We finally came to Iran Street. A narrow little passage, crammed with people, many of them armed, led somewhere to the right. Our escort got out to explain to the guards and the crowd surrounded the car, their noses pressed to the windshield--they were curious to find out who was inside.

But the road was cleared and the car slowly entered the courtyard of the school where Khomeyni lived. There was a large crowd there too--they were waiting for him to appear. With difficulty we were led through the crowd to the doors of the school. After some altercations, the doors were opened from the inside and we went into the building. It was not as crowded as in the courtyard, but there were plenty of all kinds of people: armed fellows and mullahs in turbans and broad loose garments. There were many young people among the priests. They were lively and gesturing in an animated way--the rings on their fingers simply sparkled. The glasses and clothes on these young people in turbans looked coquettishly foppish. Some people met us--they did not introduce themselves--and sensing sidelong curious glances at us, we began to climb the stairs to the third floor. Suddenly a not very tall man in clerical garb and glasses took both my hands and welcomed me with a smile. Like all "new" Iranians, he did not introduce himself. Later we saw his photograph in the paper and realized that it was Khalkhali--a very controversial and unusual figure among the Iranian clergy. At one time he had been chairman of the fast-moving Islamic revolutionary tribunals, then he was the head of an organization to fight narcotics. After this organization had carried out a number of successful, even "overly successful" raids--the interests of certain spiritual dignitaries were affected--Khalkhali had had to leave the political arena for a time. He was a fierce opponent of Bazargan and more than once called him a traitor to the revolution.

Khalkhali led us into one of the classrooms--at the entrance we took off our shoes, as is the custom; he said that Khomeyni would come there. We began to protest warmly, saying why trouble him, we could go to him ourselves. They explained to us that that was how people in Europe behaved, but here it was different: wait, the master will himself come to you.

The desks had been taken from the classroom; a school blackboard hung by itself. On the floor were simple carpets with a white cloth spread over them next to the walls, and small cushions lying there. There were also

telephones on the floor next to the wall. The windows were open and the noise of the crowd could be heard--they were calling for the Imam.

Khomeyni appeared at the doors unexpectedly. He was wearing a turban and a light-brown mantle like a cloak over his dark clothing. Freeing his right hand from its loose folds, he made the usual welcoming gesture and again hid his hand. I approached and greeted him. He nodded and with a gesture invited me to sit down on the cushions. I sat down to his left and our first secretary Vladimir Georgiyevich Fenopetov sat down next to me and a little in front. Two mullahs took their seats and a third crept up on his knees, while some fellow balanced a portable tape recorder near Khomeyni's mouth.

Khomeyni nodded politely in response to my welcoming words, but his eyes were guarded and he seemed to be preparing himself for something unexpected. That surprised me. In many years of diplomatic service, I had never seen foreign figures meeting for the first time so guarded, so internally mobilized.

Khomeyni is of average height, has a handsome face and correct features, and seems smaller than he does in pictures. Below beetling broad brows his eyes are deepset and dark and radiate strength. His hands are not an old man's hands; the veins do not show and the skin is as smooth as the skin on his face and dark pinkish. I observed all this while Volodya was translating my words and Khomeyni was looking at him.

Khomeyni responded well to the greetings and to the words that new favorable opportunities were opening up for relations between our countries. He thanked me for the friendly feelings toward the Iranian revolution and the people who had made it. He expressed satisfaction that the revolution was not only a political one but also, as he said, an Islamic one. Pride in the Iranian people, who virtually without weapons and "with the fist" dealt a shattering blow to "one of the great powers" and the criminal regime which supported it, and confidence that the new Iran would not allow any outside intervention in its affairs rang out in his words. He called the Shah not by name but "that man."

I said that there had been good relations between the peoples of Russia and Iran for a long time-- "after all, we share a very long border." A chill had appeared during the time of the Pahlevi dynasty, it is true, but now, he said, "I very much hope that there will be not only friendly but sincere relations with your country."

Involuntarily I thought, how can these words be reconciled with those attacks against the Soviet Union which have begun to be noted in Iran? Either Khomeyni was being cunning or it was happening against his will and desire. Of course, I kept the conversation on the theme of the need for good-neighbor relations and emphasized that our government was also born in the fire of revolution and that we were well aware of the Iranian leadership's fears regarding attempts at outside intervention in the country's affairs. I told him about the current structure of Soviet-Iranian trade-economic ties. Khomeyni became animated and recalled that at one time Iran had received sugar loaves in blue paper and galoshes from our country.

By the end of the meeting, which lasted more than an hour, it was apparent that Khomeyni felt less constrained. In farewell he even smiled and shook my hand--I later learned, and what is more subsequently saw myself, that he usually avoided handshakes.

Coming out into the courtyard, we were immediately surrounded by people who tried to express their warmest feelings to us. Each one wanted to just touch with his hand the clothing of those whom Khomeyni--their leader and Imam--had received. Our car could not leave immediately: a Mercedes blocked the road. Seeing this the people moved it aside with their hands. Khomeyni appeared at the window at that point and the crowd greeted him noisily and started for the school.

The next morning... The next morning Tehran newspapers printed a short item with a reference to the France Press Agency which quoted one of the newspapers in Saudi Arabia which (newspaper) quoted a certain person close to Khomeyni who quoted his conversation with Khomeyni. And the essence of the note was that Khomeyni had supposedly lodged a protest with the Soviet Union against its intervention (!) in Iran's affairs. Khomeyni had not received a response to this protest and now, they said, a critical moment had come in Soviet-Iranian relations. However, already by morning Iranian radio and in the evening the newspapers and television reported our visit to Khomeyni and cited his statements almost in full. This, of course, caused a sensation in diplomatic and journalistic circles. The telephones were ringing constantly at our Embassy... That evening the film "The Battleship 'Potemkin'" was shown on Iranian television.

But on 1 March 1979 Khomeyni left for the main religious center of the country--the city of Qom. He designated Telegani--the most popular political-religious figure in Iran--his representative in Tehran.

Khomeyni and the Red Ayatollah

I talked with Khomeyni another 5-6 times before he stopped receiving foreign ambassadors at all--this happened after he had a heart attack. The talks took place in Qom. This city is 150 kilometers from Tehran and we had to leave long before the appointed time since the road was often jammed with transport. At the entrance to the city a panorama of its famous mosques with the gold cupolas opened up. Bypassing the central square, we crossed a bridge to the other shore. The substratum of Iranian society which could be called below average settled here. The homes were small and poor. Khomeyni's residence was in one of these single-story homes on a small narrow street which came out on a vacant lot. Across the road in several little houses was something like an office, a "settling pond" for visitors. And thousands of people were always crowding together on the little street and in the vacant lot yearning for a look at the Imam. Judging from the clothing and the faces, they came from all parts of the country...

From time to time Khomeyni would appear on the flat roof of his little house surrounded by people close to him, usually among them his son Akhmed and sometimes grandsons; Tavassoli, his secretary and bodyguard, blackbearded with

an obstinate look, a tall, powerful mullah, was always at his side. When the Imam appeared the crowd seemed to explode. They would greet him completely unself-consciously, both together and individually, and many of them, especially the men, had tears in their eyes. A manifestation of the Messiah.

Khomeyni was invariably in a turban and a loose, dressing-gown-like garment with broad sleeves. Smoothly, as if in slow motion, he would crook his right arm and raise it in greeting and lower it unhurriedly. Up--and down. Up--and down. And just as smoothly, he would turn around slowly, as if he wanted to envelop the crowd from one end to the other, from the horizon to his feet. His left hand would hold the skirt of his dressing gown and his rings would gleam. Like a fan his right hand would rise and then fall. His handsome face, always somewhat morose and impassive, would not move a muscle; he would just raise his powerful eyebrow now and then. He did not give a speech from the roof and he did not talk even with those people standing next to him. This spectacle would last 3-4 minutes, and then Khomeyni and his retinue would leave the roof. Khomeyni's calm, stately gestures and his entire manner were unusually effective against the background of the roaring crowd with mouths distorted in ecstasy. Really, everything was calculated for this contrast and it made a tremendous impression. However, we could not relax--there was a talk facing us in a few minutes and we had to concentrate.

We usually waited for him to receive us in a little house opposite--it was something like an office there. We would take off our shoes on the threshold. We would go inside. We were asked to sit down and we sat on the floor--there was no furniture in the room, just a few small short-legged tables. The people there were in Khomeyni's service. They all had beards which grew right up to their eyes. They met us politely and offered us strong tea in miniature Persian glasses--with a lump of sugar to hold in your mouth while you were drinking it, as was the custom. If we found them at a modest breakfast--flat cakes and sheep's milk cheese on a newspaper spread on the floor and tea--they would hospitably offer to share their meal. If any of them smoked, they would offer us a cigarette, too. They did not ask who we were or why we had come to visit. They were simple people and understood that if we had come to see the Imam, it meant that we were there on business and should be respected.

Once, waiting there squatting until we were invited to see Khomeyni, we unintentionally witnessed the reception of visitors in the "Imam's office." A woman completely covered by a veil, turned weeping to the mullah seated at a small table opposite us. She had come to ask the Imam's help: her small son had become ill and could not get well--there was no money for medicine. The mullah listened impassively (already used to such requests, most likely) but attentively. Then he interrupted her lamentation by stretching out his hand with palm up: he meant he understood everything. He thrust his hand inside his gown, took out money, and slipped it to the woman without looking: "This is for you from the Imam." She began to bow low and thank him. The mullah motioned with his hand, as if saying: thank the Imam... Immediately another woman in a veil crawled up on her knees. Again bows, tearful grievances, requests. And the mullah listened impassively, again cut the supplicant off with a gesture, pulled out two pieces of paper money with his gnarled fingers, and silently slipped them to the woman: pray for the Imam...

Then we were politely ushered in. Our legs had become numb from sitting on the cushions for so long, and we rose with effort, hobbled to the door, put on our shoes, and were led across the threshold--the Pasdars had already cleared people from the back street. There was a small room with two tables in it, just past the entrance to Khomeyni's home--the mullah secretaries were sitting there. We took off our shoes on the cement floor and were led into the adjoining room. It was completely empty; there was nothing but a blue and white checkered flannelette blanket folded up several times lying near one of the walls; it was already familiar to us--the Imam would sit there.

Khomeyni usually appeared after 2-3 minutes. He would not come in through the door by which we entered but through another. He would resolutely make his way to his place, looking attentively at each of us. He would respond to our bows with a slight nod. He did not offer his hand--it was not his custom. He would sit down against the wall and gesture for me to sit down beside him, and with a nod indicate to the others to sit down in front of him.

If the meeting took place in the morning, he was animated and quickly and intelligently responded to people's statements. But by evening he was tired and his ideas were not sufficiently precisely formulated, and he omitted certain complex questions. And it was also difficult for us to concentrate when the crowd was roaring outside the wall and demanding that Khomeyni appear to them. It is true that if "Be quiet! The Imam is talking with important guests!" suddenly rang out from the loudspeakers, the crowd of many thousands of people would quiet down instantly. And when, barely moving our legs which had become numb from sitting on the floor for so long, we came out, we could actually feel the looks directed at us--in the minds of the people waiting for the Imam, we whom he had talked with were fortunate people.

There were almost always three of us--the advisor-envoy Yevgeniy Dmitriyevich Ostrovenko and First Secretary Vladimir Georgiyevich Fenopetov, in the capacity of interpreter, would come with me. Both of them knew Persian very well so an accurate interpretation was insured. I spoke Russian and Khomeyni spoke Persian.

Once, before Khomeyni's arrival there appeared in the room a young man in spiritual vestments that he was clearly not accustomed to--he held the edge of his gown awkwardly and wore his turban differently than all the others. We politely inquired who he was. After muttering something incomprehensible in English, he asked what language we were going to speak to the Imam in. We answered Russian and Persian, as always. "But I don't know Russian," the young man said. We expressed sympathy to him and noted that we had had good experience talking with Khomeyni in his native Persian. No, he impudently retorted, the conversation had to be carried on in English and he was supposed to interpret it. "Otherwise we (?) won't be certain that the Soviet ambassador's ideas reach the Imam correctly and the main thing, that the Imam's ideas reach the Soviet ambassador." This surprised us greatly; such a problem had never arisen before. We suggested he ask the Imam: we would do whatever he wished. The young man, stamping his foot in irritation, left the room. He returned in several minutes. "Here," he said, shaking some shred of paper before his nose so it was impossible to read anything, "The Imam's son wrote that the Imam wants the ambassador to hold the conversation in English,

which I (he importantly thumped himself on the chest) will have the honor of translating into Farsi and from Farsi." Since all three of us knew English and two of us knew Persian, we decided not to argue but to monitor this fine fellow a little better when he was interpreting Khomeyni's words from Persian into English and mine from English into Persian. And besides, there was no time to argue--the Imam came in.

We took our seats. The young man prostrated himself and took Khomeyni's hand and began to kiss it. Not only were we surprised, but so was Khomeyni, who in a fastidious and perplexed way withdrew his hand. Remaining in the same pose, the young man whispered something to him. The impression was created that Khomeyni was seeing this man for the first time, and the latter seemed to be introducing himself to Khomeyni. The uninvited interpreter took a portable tape recorder from the folds of his clothing and placed it between me and Khomeyni. Khomeyni stared, surprised, at the tape recorder. The young man, who had obsequiously prostrated himself before Khomeyni, whispered something to him and pressed the button of the tape recorder.

Khomeyni frowned, thought a bit, and, apparently, deciding "not to wash Islamic dirty linen in public," indicated to me with his eyes that I could begin. I understood that there would be no confidential conversation, and it was not needed then, Khomeyni would not be candid. That is the way it is in diplomatic practice. I started to speak in English. Khomeyni looked at me in surprise. After explaining that I was speaking in English, which was a foreign language to both him and me, only because I was fulfilling his request which was conveyed to me, I was silent, awaiting the translation. The young man grinned in my face. I said: "Well, go ahead and translate it." He sluggishly whispered several words in Persian, not mentioning, of course, the reason I changed to English.

My comrades began to speak in Persian, but the young man cut them short, saying, also in Persian, that it was an official meeting and order had to be preserved... The presence of Khomeyni, who listened to all this with amazement, did not upset him a bit. I interrupted the skirmish: "All right, I'll speak in English, only my comrades will verify your translation." The effectiveness of the talk was, of course, not great. Khomeyni made general comments and expressed himself obscurely. The "interpreter" translated my statements crudely. Both sides, it appeared, understood the uniqueness of the situation and were restrained.

Arriving at the next meeting with Khomeyni, we again saw this "interpreter." When everyone was seated, I spoke in Russian, and my comrades quickly translated into Persian: "What I must talk to you about, your Grace, is state business, therefore I suggest that any secondary objects are superfluous," and I indicated the tape recorder with my eyes. Without lifting his left hand from his knee, Khomeyni made a slight gesture with his palm, as if to cast something aside. The powerful Tavassoli entered the room instantly, and immediately we were rid of the superfluous objects--both the tape recorder and the young man in the awkwardly worn turban. Later I saw him by accident--this time he was in the usual civilian clothing--in the corridors of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and asked the Iranian accompanying us about him. In response I heard: "He's from the informers guard."

If Khomeyni talked with us without witnesses, you could argue or even joke with him, observing proper form of course. It was during such meetings that he was most candid. It must be noted that he never tried to please the person he was talking to and spoke in a regular voice, even morosely, but at times you could still feel both a smile and sarcasm in his speech. He was reasonable and approached many things very realistically and took particular circumstances into account. However, frequently the information he was given was imprecise or deliberately distorted certain facts and events. To be sure, this type of information was so absurd and fabricated so primitively that repudiating it posed no particular problem. Khomeyni accepted explanations and conclusions with understanding. But when the talk to some degree pertained to ideological views, mutual understanding could not be expected. Khomeyni did not possess breadth of views and tolerance and was always consumed by the goal he faced. Inwardly convinced and self-disciplined, he stood like a rock where that was concerned. But in general he always and invariably spoke out for good relations with the Soviet Union if sharp questions were touched on during the talk (on the use of Iran's territory by Afghan counterrevolutionaries, for example) and said: "After all, our country had extensive relations with yours back when certain now 'great' powers (an allusion to the United States) didn't even exist." Khomeyni's words sharply contradicted what was happening in Iran, and we could not fail to direct his attention to the anti-Soviet slogans resounding more and more frequently during mass prayer lectures and the newspapers' attacks on the Soviet Union. "That will happen," he answered. "It is simply the way our young people want to emphasize their utmost support of full independence, which Iran has been deprived of for so many centuries."

Sayyed Makhmud Telegani occupied a special place among Iran's religious-political figures. Everyone called him ayatollah. Everyone, that is, except Khomeyni, who called him khodzhat-ol-eslam, a rather ordinary rank in the hierarchy of Muslim priests of the religious cult.

Telegani was over 70. He had been in the Shah's prison for a long time and had been tortured; the executioners tore his toenails off and he could not stand for a long period of time. At the demand of the masses Telegani was released from prison not long before the uprising and he became an idol of the active part of the revolution--the "Mujahedeen of the Iranian people." He had even organized mass demonstrations under the Shah and was at one time chairman and then member of the conspiratorial Islamic Revolutionary Council. When Telegani was appointed leader of the Friday prayer meetings in Tehran, more than a million people would gather for his sermon! In other words, it was impossible to imagine the Iranian revolution without Telegani, as it was impossible to imagine it without Khomeyni. Of course, a meeting with him was very desirable, and soon after the revolution we took measures to insure we would get such an opportunity.

The meeting was set for 19 March 1979 and we were given the address--it proved to be not far from the Embassy in a poor region on the outskirts of the city. During Khomeyni's stay in Qom, Telegani was his "deputy" in Tehran, and this was like his "headquarters" and temporary residence. Bearded young people with automatic rifles met us at the entrance to a small house and took us up

the circular staircase common here to the third floor to a poorly furnished room--several wooden chairs and a cupboard covered with dust. We were asked to wait.

A very old man in glasses, a turban, and a broad black cloak came in after a few minutes. He greeted us joyfully and affectionately, extending both hands, and invited us to again sit down in the chairs. This time they brought tea. Telegani took out a crumpled pack of Winston cigarettes from his pocket and offered us a smoke. I did not refuse and flicked my lighter. We both began to smoke--we could get somewhat comfortable and scrutinize each other.

Telegani was younger than Khomeyni but looked much older; the features of his face were large and he looked tired, even ill. Kind and wise eyes fastened their gaze on the Soviet ambassador. We somehow felt immediate respect for him.

It is not only proximity that unites the Iranian and Soviet peoples, Telegani said unhurriedly, inhaling his cigarette. Our peoples have at least three common features. First, both of them oppose imperialism and colonialism, and the Soviet people, who made the Great October Socialist Revolution, have served as an example to this powerful international movement which has engulfed more than just Iran. Secondly, despite differences in ideology, both peoples respect principles common to all mankind and profess the most considerate attitude toward man and consider the interests of man the main ones in their policy. And, thirdly--here he smiled a little slyly--both our peoples are "peoples of the East"; therefore it is easier for us to reach mutual understanding with you or you with us than you and us with Western countries.

Based on all this, Telegani concluded, I believe that any difficulties in relations between our countries are of secondary significance and can easily be overcome. Soviet-Iranian relations have a fine future, he was convinced of that, mutual understanding will rapidly grow. "Surely it is revealing that I used to be afraid to even walk past the Soviet Embassy, and now I'm discussing how to build better relations between our countries with the Soviet ambassador!"

Of course, I said tactfully that it was incomprehensible to us why anti-Sovietism began to appear in Iran after the revolution. Telegani brushed that aside. Don't pay too much attention, he said, it's all superficial and will soon pass. That is the effect of the influence of imperialist propaganda which asserts that the Soviet Union wants to dominate other peoples, both politically and ideologically. The Soviet Union will knock these weapons out of the enemies' hands by its attitude toward Iran.

The conversation was relatively short, but made a very good impression on us.

In early April Telegani's son and daughter-in-law--Mujahedin--were seized when they came out of the building of the representation (Embassy) of the Palestine Liberation Organization in Iran and beaten up and thrown in prison. The rumor soon spread throughout the city that Telegani's sons were supposed to get a United Nations document for him containing information on the American ties of

some members of Khomeyni's circle, in particular Yazdi, at the Embassy; so this arrest was the work of Yazdi's hands, at that time the deputy prime minister "on questions of revolution." (They were saying that Yazdi had done a great deal to spread the flattering rumor about himself that he was called the "Islamic Robespierre").

The Mujahedin came out onto the streets of Tehran. An explosion of indignation shook the capital. Soon Telegani's sons were released, but he pointedly left Tehran and the next day made an announcement: the entire incident was not his personal business but a conspiracy against all the people. And so it was. Powerful demonstrations in support of Telegani took place in cities and words insulting to Khomeyni began to be heard. The Imam's authority tottered and he sent his son to one of Telegani's sons to settle the incident.

Later Telegani returned to Tehran. As a religious-political leader he was no less popular than Khomeyni, and in fact they called him the "Red Ayatollah." So it became apparent that the attacks on him would not stop, especially since on the political level he was for uniting all of Iran's revolutionary forces and for a broad front of cooperation in favor of nationwide interests and he persistently stood up for creating local election councils. The idea of people's power which they proclaimed, though not sufficiently precise, contrasted with the idea of a "strong ruler" and the infallibility of religious figures.

Telegani also understood the need to satisfy the national demands of the Kurds and Iran's other nationalities and believed that the native population itself should try to solve local questions. Twice Khomeyni sent him to Kurdistan when riots erupted there, and both times Telegani managed to conduct negotiations so that peace was restored.

Indeed this man possessed a broad political outlook, not to mention life experience. And he did not attribute credit for making the revolution to the clergy alone, as Khomeyni had begun to do. Telegani was very aware that he was making revolution; unlike others he himself was a direct participant and leader.

On 9 September 1979, after arranging it beforehand, I again went to a meeting with Telegani. This time the precautionary measures taken by his guard were more thorough, or in any case, noticeable. Thus, they did not give us his address (Telegani did not have his own house; he lived with one of his friends), but suggested we go to Telegani's office at 2045 hours. There a relatively young man who called himself an associate of that office got in our car. When we asked what his name was, he answered: "You can call me... well, Ismailzade." We drove a long ways, somewhere to the south. Then we got out of the car and plodded along an empty street, and turned left into some passage between the little houses. There was no light on the streets, nor in the houses, for some reason. So, in the complete darkness we bumped into some metal gates. "Ismailzade" knocked and talked with someone, the bolt clanked, and we went through the gate into what seemed to be a small courtyard. Invisible in the darkness, someone apologized for the electricity being off

and the telephone not working. Then, the way lit with lanterns, we were led to the third floor of a small private home. Candles were burning everywhere. We took off our shoes and went into a modestly furnished parlor. The escort asked us to wait: Telegani was doing evening namaz. The door to the next room was half open and muttering interrupted by pauses and heavy sighs reached us from there.

After about 10 minutes Telegani came out to us. He looked much better. He was just as cordial as the last time. By that time khodzhat-ol-eslam's Gafuri Golzade and Shabestari had already come into the sitting room. They had been named delegates to the international Muslim symposium on the contribution of Muslims of Central Asia and the Volga Region to the social doctrine of Islam, which was to be held in Dushanbe. Two other people also came--an elderly man who, as was the custom, did not introduce himself, and one quite young--either friends or relatives.

Telegani invited me to sit down next to him on the couch and the others sat in chairs opposite us. The soft light of the candles made the room seem cozy and disposed us to conversation.

Like the last time, Telegani right away reached somewhere into the depths of his roomy attire and got some cigarettes and offered us a smoke. It was the first time I had seen such a pack, and I did not like the cigarette; I put it out after the first puff. During the conversation tea was offered in elegant little glasses and fruit and cookies were on the little table near the couch.

Several days before I had returned from Moscow where I took my vacation and I was able to tell Telegani how enthusiastically the Soviet people were responding to the Iranian revolution and how they wanted to find out about the social restructuring in Iran. I said that the Soviet Union supported the revolution and that it strictly observed the principle of nonintervention in the internal affairs of other peoples. I told how Lenin regarded the peoples of the East and revolutions in the East. I also touched upon the subject of Islam and communism. I said that the difference in the ideologies of our countries was not an obstacle to developing good-neighbor relations. And, of course, I asked Telegani to tell how Iran's new leadership at that time viewed Soviet-Iranian relations.

Telegani said that he was very glad to hear the Soviet Union's viewpoint on all these important questions from the Soviet ambassador in such detail. He knew a great deal but he also learned a great deal more. It was especially useful, as he noted, for Gafuri Golzade and Shabestari to hear all this; they had not yet encountered Soviet people and Soviet reality--and they were going to Dushanbe.

He repeated what he had already said at the first meeting: there are more social foundations for Soviet-Iranian relations than simply proximity--the anti-imperialism of both countries. He emphasized that the Soviet Union was bearing the main burden of this struggle which was important to the peoples of the entire world.

After listening to what I had to say about religion, he said: "But you know if I had lived in the times of Marx and Engels, I would also have raised the flag of struggle against religion, since at that time religion, including Islam, served the interests of the oppressors and helped enslave the people. But now, when the revolution in Iran has demonstrated that the people support Islam, Islam itself has changed fundamentally. It has been 'purified to its original essence' and become the religion of the unfortunate and no longer serves the interests of the oppressors." Therefore he, Telegani, saw no sense in struggle between Islam and communism. After all, they both had the same goal but they were inclined to move toward it in different ways. He had seen communists when he was in prison under the Shah--they were bold and stalwart people and patriots. One thing was bad--they did not believe in God, in Allah. So if communists would recognize Allah, then practically no disagreements would arise with them.

This concept, which was close to the worldview of the "Mujahedin of the Iranian People," was not at all in keeping with those anticommunist ideas which Khomeyni and his supporters had begun to propagandize throughout Iran so actively. It was news that Islam could be both "bad," against the people, and "good"--for the people. I thought that Telegani would be declared a heretic if he professed such "seditious" views openly. After all, intolerance of the slightest deviation from what Khomeyni was feeding the masses had by then become the norm in Iran.

Telegani explained the unfriendliness of the clergy toward the Soviet Union as for the most part the result of prejudices which had developed under the long influence of the Shah's propaganda. They had tried to persuade people in all kinds of ways that there had to be a strong Shah in Iran; otherwise the atheistic Soviet Union would inevitably seize the country, they said. Belief in that stopped many religious figures from anti-Shah demonstrations; they needed a strong power for protection from atheism--communism. And now some of the clergy were afraid of the Soviet Union because the strong power of the Shah had fallen.

Telegani told about how the Iranian clergy's attitude toward the Soviet Union had changed during World War II. It was believed that Muslims in the Soviet Union were oppressed and persecuted. Therefore, when Nazi Germany attacked the Soviet Union, many people expected that the Soviet Muslims would fight against those who had "oppressed" their authority. However, when the Nazis reached Moscow and Leningrad, the spiritual leaders of the Muslims in the Soviet Union called the believers to a "holy war"--the jihad, the highest form of selfless struggle of a Muslim--against the invaders! This made an enormous impression on the Iranian clergy. The Muslims of both countries had to associate with each other more, Telegani concluded, and then the last prejudices would vanish.

But why only Muslims, I objected. After all, Islam, as they tell us, is a humane doctrine based on the equality of all people. And the main difference between people is by no means adherence to one faith or another, but in relation to other people: whether as exploiter, whether honest, kind, generous, and the like. Telegani agreed and said that I was right. That was amazing--other religious figures, without listening to any arguments, would

energetically "prove" that a true Muslim believer was higher than other people!

I also told about the bewilderment aroused in our country by accusations of "intervention" in the affairs of the Kurds, which supposedly was the reason for their unrest. Telegani answered that he had been in Kurdistan several times and did not at all believe that the Soviet Union participated in the Kurds' riots. He promised to expose these fabrications in one of his Friday sermons and advised us to refute false accusations more energetically and effectively.

The conversation was always interesting and lively. Telegani felt good and endured jokes and made them himself. However, time passed and it got late and I tried to rise several times in order to give our host the opportunity to rest, but Telegani again invited me to sit next to him on the couch, joking. All the same, at 2330 hours I said firmly that we could not take up so much of his time any more. We bid warm farewell. In leaving Telegani expressed a desire to talk again in a little while.

... At 0700 hours the private telephone rang. Iranian radio was then broadcasting that Telegani had died that night--"after a lengthy conversation with the Soviet ambassador"! They also gave some "details." After talking with the Soviet ambassador, Telegani had asked for something to eat, since he had to be at a meeting of the Council of Experts which was writing the constitution early in the morning. He went to bed after he ate. Soon he began to retch. They massaged his chest and put ice on his heart. He seemed to feel better and dozed off, but then began to wheeze and gasp for breath and turn blue. They sent for the doctor and he certified death at 0145 hours from a "strong heart attack."

According to Muslim custom, an autopsy after death is not allowed. Many people still insisted that the autopsy be done and the causes of the death of one of the most prominent leaders of the revolution be more accurately determined, but the high-ranking clergy categorically opposed it. So the cause of Telegani's death was not actually established. The funeral was set for that very morning. Muslims do indeed bury the dead quickly, but not that quickly.

The wake was held from 0900 to 1000 hours in the mosque of Tehran University and the burial was in the Bekheshte-Zakhra Cemetery. We hurried to the university. Nothing of the sort! People were walking along the streets, not even leaving a centimeter of free space. It seemed that the very air of Tehran was filled with great and genuine grief that morning. And another worry that all these simple crying people not only felt the pain of irreparable loss, but also anxiety for their own future. How would they live without Telegani? The spontaneous march of millions of Tehran residents and its atmosphere made a tremendous impression. Despite expectations, Khomeyni did not come from Qom for the burial; in a modest message on Telegani's death, he called him "khodzhat-ol-eslam" rather than "ayatollah", as all the simple people called him.

On the evening of 11 September 1979 there was a big rally at the university stadium in connection with Telegani's death. The government held it. The diplomatic corps was also invited. We sat on a large sheet of material spread on the ground. From time to time fellows with portable atomizers on their backs forced their way among us--they were sprinkling everyone with rose water according to Persian custom. A wire fence separated us from the thousands of people who had assembled for the rally. The entire current government and the new command of the army and the police were customarily squatting there next to us and listening to what representatives of various parties and strata of the population were saying. It seemed that the new leaders of the country were dismayed at the revolution they themselves and the people who had rebelled, now making a dull noise outside the wire fence, had wrought. For no one knew what they were striving for or where they were going. Very strange appeals and orders were coming from Qom. But all the simple people who genuinely believed in everything which they were being compelled to believe in were prepared to walk through fire and water to the death for Khomeyni...

The Attack

The policy of friendship toward Iran and its people who made the historical revolution resulted in greater sympathy toward the Soviet Union on the part of the Iranians, above all the working people and the progressive intelligentsia. We saw and experienced a frank display of sympathy every day, at each step. This was not to the liking of internal reaction and the foreign imperialist forces and their agents in the country, including those in leadership posts. The authorities quickly began to artificially create an atmosphere of estrangement, distrust, unfriendliness, and later open hostility toward the northern neighbor. This hostility was manifested in different ways. Among other things there were attempts at criminal raids on the Soviet Embassy in Tehran with the aim of arousing hostility toward the Soviet Union, provoking serious complications in Soviet-Iranian relations, and, finally, showing interested Western forces that the Iranian authorities were not following a hostile line toward the United States alone. There were several attacks and one of them, the most barbarous, came at the very end of 1980, at the height of the Iranian government's negotiations with the United States on conditions for freeing the hostages, associates of the American Embassy in Tehran seized in November 1979.

On 22 December 1980 the phone rang several times--Iranians who did not identify themselves warned that preparations were being made for an attack on the Soviet Embassy in the immediate future. We informed the deputy minister of foreign affairs Khakga about these phone calls and asked him to take the necessary measures, which, of course, he promised to do. Then we appealed to the Ayatollah Kyani, the "leader" of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and to the police.

Kyani's statement was published a day later: in view of war time all demonstrations are prohibited; the Pasdars and the people must cooperate and insure order in the cities. However, we received information that on 27 December 1980 a large demonstration was planned near our Embassy. We again appealed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the police, and the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Their statements were most reassuring. Nonetheless, we

checked all our "mobilization" steps once more according to the timetable worked out--we had come to this. The Embassy territory was deserted. It also seemed quiet on the adjacent streets, but a crowd had begun to gather rapidly on Firdousi Square, the one closest to us.

Suddenly, about 1100 hours, shouts and a loud continually-swelling rumble are heard. A large crowd is pouring along Kuchek Khan street, which leads directly to the gates of the Embassy. It is getting closer and closer. Random shots ring out. At that point the reinforced guard put there by the authorities that day is supposed to go into action. But what is this? The siren on the roof wails--a signal to us: an attack, masses of people are crawling through the gates! They set off the siren in the guardhouse at the gates. That means that our comrades have not even managed to give the intermittent warning signal. The siren wails constantly, frighteningly, and deafeningly. At this signal the entire staff of the Embassy takes cover in the service building.

So it is another attack--already the third one!

We try to get through by phone to Khodapanakhi, the acting minister of foreign affairs. His secretary apologizes and goes to tell him we are calling; in a minute we hear: "The minister can't talk with you." I ask if the minister refuses to speak with me, but the secretary has already hung up and later her phone is disconnected altogether. We do not manage to get through to the leadership of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on any of the phones--all of them are "busy"; we only get the chief of the protocol department, who promises to tell his boss about our call.

Dull blows and the clinking of glass reach us from the yard. Through the window I see gloomy-looking people hurriedly throwing stones at the windows of the representation building--it is in front of the service building. There in the representation building is the historic hall where in 1943 the conference of heads of the Allied Powers--the USSR, the United States, and Great Britain--took place, as well as reception rooms. My office is on the fourth floor of the service building, but stones even reach its windows.

Embassy advisor Nikolay Ivanovich Kozyrev was at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at that time. We reached him by telephone and told him to get through to any official. Alas, all of them were "busy" and no one could receive him (yet another indication that the attack was premeditated and organized); moreover, the Iranians insisted that Kozyrev leave the Ministry of Foreign Affairs building!

The dean of the diplomatic corps, CSSR Ambassador Polacek, calls. After finding out what is happening he promises to immediately get in touch with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He calls again after a short time: no one answered at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs...

An enormous mirror we have on the second floor falls with a clank. The shutters on the windows of the movie hall of the representation building fly open and a metal garbage can flies through one of the windows and glass showers down...

Later my comrades and I reconstructed a picture of the attack.

The crowd on Kuchek Khan Street quickly moved toward the Embassy. Pasdars walked in front of it, walking backwards and shooting into the air. At the gates the Pasdars moved aside and the crowd crawled through the bars. The guard showed no resistance. Our comrades barely managed to set off the alarm siren. The glass in the guardhouse crashed down and the infuriated people taking part in the pogrom burst through the door with clubs in their hands and began to destroy everything. The guards on duty barely managed to flee through the other door...

A "shock group" of about 60 people climbed over the gates, but the crowd remained on the street. They shouted slogans, burned Soviet flags, and raged in every possible way before the movie cameras. The "shock group" instantly split up when they reached the Embassy's territory. Some scrambled up the pedestal of the flagstaff, took down the flag, and bit through the metal straps with a tool specially devised for this purpose. Others destroyed the guardhouse. Still others--most of them--rushed toward the representation house. They smashed the glass main doors to smithereens and started to crack open the doors of the service entrance as well. In accordance with our plan of action our comrades fell back to the service building. And devastation began in the representation building.

Not only the clinking of glass and the rumble of the pogrom reached us but also strong dull blows on the floor. As it turned out, after destroying everything on the first floor of the service building where the associates' apartments were located, the bandits began to ram the ceiling in order to get to the service areas on the second floor.

Some time later the noise died down. We could see policemen chasing some people in the garden--they caught some and they shot some. They combed the whole park and all the areas of the representation building; not only knives but also pistols were discovered and confiscated in some of the places which had been attacked.

We came downstairs and went to the representation building. Everything that could have been destroyed was destroyed. The Venetian blinds were smashed and bent, splinters of glass stuck out on the window frames wherever there was mortar, and glass crunched under our feet. All the wooden doors were smashed and broken into pieces. The marble memorial plaque with the rolled gold letters commemorating the Tehran Conference had been destroyed. The piano was mutilated. The pictures had either been cut into strips with a knife or punctured with sticks. In the main hall the enormous mirrors, the small marble tables under them, and the unique porcelain vases had been destroyed. Even three crystal chandeliers which were hanging high up had been destroyed--that meant an appropriate "tool" had been prepared beforehand and the bandits knew what to destroy. Fragments of furniture were lying about, antique carpets which had been set on fire were smoking, and the parquet floor was broken up. In the movie hall the wide screen was hanging in shreds, cut crosswise, the enormous velvet curtains had disappeared, and the chairs had been ripped. All the dishes in the kitchen had been broken...

We managed to immediately invite the head of the protocol department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He sent two of his deputies. We lodged a protest with them and they were shown the destruction done by the bandits. Crunching through the glass, they visited all the buildings with great curiosity. They were silent. Then the representative of the Ministry of Internal Affairs came; and he pleaded with us to say that his ministry had "observed international laws" and that there had been no damage to the Embassy. When he had been led through the destroyed buildings, he hurried somewhere to make a phone call.

The journalists and photographer from the Bekheshti newspaper DZHOMKHURIYE ESLAMI were among the last to leave the Embassy's territory; and they did not want to leave but assured our comrades that they had the appropriate "permission."

We stood in the midst of the destruction and all of us felt... It was clear that the barbarous attack had been prepared beforehand with attention to detail. By whom? By the authorities, of course. No one had ever seen stones on the Embassy's territory before; that meant the people brought them specially. It was suspicious that during the attack none of the officials were around. The "permission" that the journalists from the Islamic Republic Party newspaper had was also suspicious. The Pasdars and the police intervened only after the black deed was done. The attackers had been instructed well. For example, they did not touch the cars parked outside next to the service building but tried to reach the second floor of that building. Everything down to the last detail confirmed that the attack was premeditated and if not at the order of the authorities, then with their knowledge.

I told the comrades to photograph everything as it was and then clean up the premises. It got dark quickly. It was quiet. The sounds of the city could be heard from afar. Cars dashed about and people went about their business as if nothing at all had happened... I walked up to the gates. The guardhouse was completely destroyed. There were four policemen on the outside near the gates--and that was all, there were no more guards. But the bandits had made threats and they would come again the next day. And, after all, the next day there were mass funeral demonstrations and hundreds of thousands of people who would be easy to provoke would be on the streets! Once again we had to appeal to the authorities. The police and the Pasdars told us directly: "We've got enough to do tomorrow without you!"

There was not a word about the attack on the Soviet Embassy in Tehran on the evening broadcasts of Iranian radio and television, although the entire world and all the "voices" reported this as the number one news story. I could not get to sleep all night but kept thinking that we had to fight our enemies' provocations...

On 29 December 1980 at 2200 hours Prime Minister Radzhay received us. He sat at his desk in his office with a coat thrown over his shoulders. As always, a lamp burned brightly on his desk. Perched next to him was Khashemi (Rafsandzhani), the younger brother of the chairman of Parliament and an "advisor" to the prime minister on foreign policy questions. They asked us to

sit down on the chairs near the wall opposite the desk--that is how disrespect for visitors is expressed there.

Radzhay smiled. We did not. I said that I had come at the behest of the Soviet Government to deliver a note of protest to the Iranian government in connection with the criminal attack on the Soviet Embassy. The note said that although the Embassy had promptly informed the Iranian authorities of the attack being readied, effective measures had not been taken and hooligan elements had carried out a pogrom. Measures had been taken only after repeated and persistent appeals by the Soviet ambassador to the authorities. In expressing its firm protest to the Iranian government, the Soviet government demanded that such incidents not be allowed again and retained the right to demand compensation for material losses and to determine the measures which would protect the interests of the Soviet Union in connection with the criminal attack on the USSR Embassy in Tehran. In addition to the official text of the note in Russian, I also delivered an unofficial translation in Persian. Radzhay said the traditional "Besmullakhi rakhmano rakhim"--"In the name of Allah, the most merciful and omnipotent"--and began to respond; immediately the word "Afghanistan" was heard, and then he went on and on. I interrupted Radzhay and asked for a translation of his words since I sensed an attempt to avoid speaking to the point, to change the subject. That was exactly what happened. Radzhay did nothing more and nothing less than lecture the Soviet Union on the events concerning Afghanistan. He did not mince words. I had to listen to every kind of thing--"the war against the Afghan people," "the aggression against a people which is a brother to the Iranians," and "support of a group of individuals who are traitors to the people"--all this was said with a smile, even with a kind of joyous triumph.

Stop, that will not do. I said that I had come to discuss the question of the criminal attack on the Soviet Embassy in Iran, not Afghanistan. However, Radzhay again took up his own points. Without waiting for him to finish, I began to speak at the same time. I said: "If the prime minister wants to speak of Afghanistan, I am ready to have a special conversation on that subject when he has time, but at another time. Today I came on a completely different question."

Radzhay answered: "If you do not want to listen to me today, we can meet another time when you're ready to listen carefully to me, as I listened to you now." I said again that I had come to talk about the attack on the Soviet Embassy, not about Afghanistan. And I was silent. Radzhay was also silent. He was silent and I was silent. This kind of "duel" continued for about 3-4 minutes. Finally, Radzhay mumbled: "Well, if you don't want to listen to me at all... " and was again silent. "No, that's not the case," I retorted. "I'm ready to listen to you, only concerning the question I came about."

Radzhay heaved a sigh of relief and, changing his tune, began anew. He said that many Afghan "brothers" had settled in Iran (since when had they become "brothers" to the Persians, I thought) and from time to time they used demonstrations to express their "natural" dissatisfaction that they had had to leave the homeland because of the "invasion" by Soviet troops. And that the 27 December 1980 demonstration had turned into an attack, "we did not expect, and therefore we didn't have enough forces to protect the Soviet Embassy" (as

if someone was protecting us at all!). Radzhay concluded with the desire that the pretext for the demonstrations would soon disappear. And there was not a word of apology that such a flagrant violation of international law had been allowed and that an attempt to insult a neighboring state had been made; there was no regret about it--on the contrary, the prime minister kept smiling mockingly. He said everything was correct, and we Persians have nothing to do with this; well, we did miscalculate and post fewer guards than were necessary...

I said dryly that I would report to the Soviet Government the opinions of the prime minister, from which it followed that he approved of the attack on our Embassy or in any case excused it. "No," Radzhay objected, "we are sorry that it happened and we will take measures to insure that such great unpleasantness doesn't happen." I showed him the photographs of the barbaric destruction and asked why all the same the government did not take measures, since we had warned them that preparations were being made for a pogrom and, moreover, all of Tehran knew about it. Radzhay could find nothing to say but: "The government will help restore what has been damaged and compensate for what was lost if we come to an agreement about it" (?!). Then, sensing how shaky his position was, he began to assert that the Soviet Embassy did not warn them that an attack was being readied but only that a demonstration was planned. This was really an insolent attempt to go on the offensive. I rejected his arguments as not serious--we could not have told them precisely what was going to be destroyed. The conversation started to become sharp and, consequently, ridiculous. Moreover, Radzhay said everything he could and we did too. The time came to say goodbye.

The next day Radzhay's version of our conversation with him was on the radio and in the newspapers. Everything was, of course, garbled and distorted, and only his statements about Afghanistan remained. Judging from reports from all Iran, people belonging to the most varied strata of the society were indignant at the attack and pointed out its organizers--Bekheshti, Gotbzade, and "K." Even statesmen did not want to remain on the sidelines. Rafsandzhani, the chairman of Parliament, almost approved the attack and the Minister of State Nabavi asserted that nothing serious had happened: after all, the Soviet Embassy had not been seized! When Bekheshti was asked during the press conference if those guilty of the attack would be punished, smiling and tenderly stroking his beard from time to time, he answered: "Nothing particular happened to the Embassy--why raise such a fuss?"

On 12 January 1981 a new announcement was made in Moscow to the Iranian Ambassador Mokri. The announcement said that the Soviet Government had the right to expect from the Iranian government a frank and unequivocal condemnation of the act committed on 27 December 1980 against the Soviet Embassy and punishment for its organizers, especially since it was a matter of the institutions and citizens of a friendly and neighboring country, the country which had been the first to recognize the revolution and support the Iranian people, and the country which was helping Iran fight those people who wanted to smother the revolution. Nothing of the sort was done, however. Expressing regret privately, the representatives of the Iranian government did not condemn the pogrom openly and the public statements of leadership figures even seemed to contain approval of it. The Soviet Government would be forced

to protect its own legal rights and interests if the Iranian government did not want or was not able to guarantee the security of Soviet institutions and Soviet citizens in Iran. Naturally, the Soviet Government demanded full compensation for the material damage inflicted on the USSR Embassy in Tehran.

The Iranians did not publish the text of the announcement but made the announcement by the Iranian Ambassador in the USSR Mokri to Agence France Press public. He said he was surprised at the sharp tone of the repeated Soviet protest and that Russia (again "Russia" rather than the Soviet Union!) attached too much importance to an "insignificant incident"; despite Russia's announcement, the government of Iran had taken all the necessary measures to prevent the demonstration. This false statement further strengthened our conviction that the Iranian government had participated in the attack. Even the dean of the diplomatic corps told us that the general director of the Main Protocol Department of the Iran Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Maktaderpur, had told him that an order had come "from above" not to help the Soviet Embassy in any way. Told him privately.

I met with Maktaderpur several days later. I asked him directly if it was true that such an order had been received. At first he was embarrassed and mumbled that he had been misunderstood. I cited facts which confirmed that Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs was doing everything possible to make the work and life of our Embassy difficult. Then I asked if the Embassy had broken any laws. Maktaderpur hurriedly answered that no, it had not. "I'll be frank," he said, "don't think that the Iranian government is on good terms with the Soviet Union. No, the government does not consider the Soviet Union a friendly country and fears it as a neighbor; therefore Iran wants to have as few dealings with it as possible--that's where the orders regarding your Embassy come from."

Minister of State Nabavi announced at a press conference that Iran considered diplomatic immunity a "conspiracy of criminals" and that it would be done away with. The TASS correspondent Krutikhin asked if these words meant that Iran was refusing to fulfill the corresponding international agreements. Nabavi answered that Iran was not declaring that officially but that the "oppressed of the world" were compelling Iran to abolish all "diplomatic privileges."

On 22 January 1981 deputy director of the Main Protocol Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Masumi invited envoy-advisor Ostrovenko to see him and took a long time explaining to him how much gas oil would be supplied to the Embassy, how the application for sending freight through customs was to be filled out, and the like. Ostrovenko could not understand what the point of the whole conversation was. Towards the end Masumi took some kind of an envelope from his desk and said that he had been ordered to deliver this to the envoy-advisor of the Soviet Embassy. Ostrovenko asked what was in the envelope, why he did not deliver it to the ambassador, and so on. Masumi answered, who knows, who knows?

The envelope delivered in such an unusual way contained the Iranian government's response to the Soviet Government's two statements in connection with the pogrom carried out at the Soviet Embassy. The response was interesting. As regards the incident of 27 December 1980 at the Soviet

Embassy, the Iranian government had already given the necessary explanations, expressed regret, and declared its readiness, after looking into it, to make compensation for the damages; it therefore considered the question closed (?). Then for some reason it talked of Iran's struggle "on its own" against the United States and imperialism. Through clenched teeth it expressed gratitude for the fact that "in several cases" the Soviet Union had helped Iran. It mentioned that Iran wanted to develop relations with its northern neighbor. In conclusion it again expressed "regret" about the incident and condemned the "flagrant acts," although with the reservation that Iran supported "freedom to express opinions." It pointed out that the Iranian government was able to guarantee the security of foreign diplomatic representations, including the Soviet Embassy and its personnel.

This statement was clearly forced. It was broadcast on radio but not printed in even one newspaper.

After the "second revolution," that is, after the clergy took power and all aspects of Iran's life were Islamized, we had to work in difficult circumstances. The main thing for us was to protect and preserve everything good that the years and decades of Soviet-Iranian relations had accumulated. To preserve it so that in more favorable conditions--we believe in that--we could start on the path of developing these relations in the interests of the peoples of both countries. Repulsing the attacks of hostile forces, which in most cases were operating according to plans developed from outside, we worked for the future.

... In 1982 I left turbulent Iran where I had lived for more than 5 years. Standing on the deck of our indefatigable diesel boat the "Guryev," which coursed between Baku and the Iranian port of Anzeli, I watched the strip of land at the horizon slowly become smaller and smaller behind the stern. The strip soon disappeared.

Did it all really happen--the Shah's brilliant court and the slums of the southern regions of Tehran and the port cities; the revolutionary flags and the turbans of the mullahs; the working people's bloody skirmishes with the soldiers and the police and the human figures prostrated in prayer; the self-sacrificing youth from the "committees" and the young "technocrats" who returned from abroad in order to control the levers of the state mechanism; the enthusiastic welcoming shouts of "The Soviet Union Is Our Friend!" and the dark roar of "Down with the Soviets!" at someone's command? And many other things. It had all been real. And I'll never forget those years...

So, Iran was left beyond the horizon of the Caspian Sea shining in the sunlight. Iran with all its passions and with its unstable new order. Iran, which has become involved in a fratricidal war with Iraq. Iran, around which, I was certain, there would be more intrigues woven by the imperialists in order to again involve it, even if indirectly, in plans to oppose the Soviet Union. Will the Iranian people, even the conscious ones, understand these insidious plans? After all, the Soviet Union is Iran's neighbor forever. A powerful, developing neighbor building the most humane society on earth. A neighbor who has frequently given Iran friendly assistance and who can be counted on.

Our interest in the achievements of the ancient culture of Iran and its history has always been great. The Russian school of Iranian studies was of worldwide importance. And how many Iranians have been introduced to the achievements of the science and culture of the Russian and other peoples of the Soviet Union! Finally, we cannot retreat from objective economic laws, and they confirm the mutual utility of developed economic ties between the two countries. The transit road to Europe across the Soviet Union is the most beneficial for Iran, and Iran has been using it for a long time; this route played an important role in those difficult times when the Western countries tried to subject Iran to an economic blockade.

Times are complicated now. The contradictions between those who are urging on the arms race, trying at any price to achieve a mythical goal--military supremacy over the forces of peace on earth, and those who affirm peaceful relations among the peoples of the planet as the only way to save mankind from catastrophe have become sharper. And in this situation it is very important to establish and develop genuine good-neighbor relations between our countries, despite the differences in their socioeconomic orders.

History sometimes develops by zig-zags rather than in the way human reason would like. But it is based on the operation of the objective laws of social development. I am certain that they will determine a good future for Soviet-Iranian relations.

FOOTNOTES

1. In the fall of the same year, 1979, during the clergy's struggle for power, Bazargan's "provisional revolutionary government" was forced to resign. After a short time Amir-Entezam was arrested and sentenced to a life term in prison for espionage for the Western countries. Later, in 1982, Gotbzade, who managed to hold the post of minister of foreign affairs for a short time, was sentenced to be shot for state treason.
2. In actual fact Bazargan's government did not take any measures to develop Soviet-Iranian relations in the 8 months it was in power. Moreover, at the end of that period, it unilaterally declared that certain important articles of the Soviet-Iranian Treaty of 1921 would cease to be in effect.
3. Abulkasim Lakhuti (1887-1957)--Soviet Tajik poet, native of Iran, and participant in revolutionary demonstrations, one of which--in Tebriz in 1922--he led. After this anti-imperialist democratic uprising was put down, he left for Soviet Russia.

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